



India-Germany
strengthen
bold defense
ties

P9



Apple
successor to
fast track India
growth

P11

P12

Shubman Gill
finds fault
with bowlers
against MI



We're going to end up with a great deal. But if talks don't go well as tomorrow's ceasefire deadline looms, we'll resume bombing.
—Donald Trump, US President

'Mossad operative behind 'Op Roaring Lion' killed on mission'

JERUSALEM: A Mossad operative who paved the way for Israel's "Operation Roaring Lion" was killed during operations outside the country, the agency's director, David Barnea, said. Although he did not clarify who the person was, when they were killed or during which incident, following protocol for active intelligence personnel, he identified them as 'M'. During a Remembrance Day ceremony for Mossad's fallen, Barnea stated that the missions led by M. significantly influenced the campaign against Iran by combining "creativity, cunning, and advanced technology". "During 'Operation Roaring Lion,' my thoughts and heart were filled with pride in the character and actions of M.," he said.



FOES BACK ON PAK TRUCE TABLE?

Trump touts 'strong position' for Islamabad talks; Vance-led team heads to Pakistan; Iran says by imposing a blockade and violating the truce, Trump seeks to justify renewed warmongering



WASHINGTON

Donald Trump declared on Tuesday that the US holds a "very, very strong" position as it prepares for a high-stakes second round of talks with Iran in Pakistan.

However, the US president's optimistic rhetoric was tempered by a stark warning: if a deal is not reached before the current 14-day ceasefire expires on Wednesday (Apr 22), "lots of bombs" will begin to fall.

The President signalled that while he is dispatching a heavy-weight delegation to Islamabad led by US Vice President JD Vance, Jared Kushner, and Special Envoy Steve Witkoff, his patience for diplomacy is wearing thin.

"We're going to end up with a great deal. I think they have no choice," Trump said, referring to the economic pressure exerted by the ongoing US naval blockade. He explicitly ruled out a long-

term extension of the current truce, stating, "I don't want to do that. We don't have that much time."

Pak the central mediator

Pakistan remains the "central mediator" in this conflict, which has paralysed global energy markets following the closure of the Strait of Hormuz. While the US team is reportedly already en route to the Pakistani capital, the Iranian side has sent mixed signals.

Ceasefire deadline looms

As the midnight deadline for the ceasefire approaches, the world's eyes are on the Serena Hotel in Islamabad. Despite the initial ceasefire, Israel continued to bombard Lebanon, which was mentioned as part of the document shared by Pakistan. Tehran's stance was clear: a ceasefire would mean no strikes in Lebanon. Though the first round of talks in Pakistan was unsuccessful, what happens in the second round remains to be seen.

WHAT IF PEACE TALK FAILS...

US: Bombs will go off Iran: Ready with new cards

WASHINGTON

Uncertainty clouded prospects of the second round of peace talks between Iran and the United States, planned to take place this week in Pakistan, remains uncertain after officials in Tehran threatened not to attend after the US seized an Iranian-flagged vessel near the Strait of Hormuz over the weekend.

The two-week ceasefire between Tehran and Washington is set to expire on Wednesday, with US President Donald Trump saying it's highly unlikely that it will be extended.

Vice President JD Vance was expected to leave for Pakistan on Tuesday, just over a week after a round of talks there with Iran's lead negotiator, Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf, ended without a deal.

Meanwhile, Iran said that by imposing a blockade and violating the ceasefire, Trump seeks to turn the negotiating table into a table of surrender or to justify renewed warmongering.

"We do not accept negoti-



Hormuz continues to choke

While both the US and Iran have expressed hope of negotiating an end to the war, they have continued to escalate a standoff in and around the Hormuz Strait, the critical water passage that has emerged as a central issue in peace talks.

Shipping traffic through the Hormuz remained broadly halted on Tuesday with only three ships passing the waterway in the past 24 hours, as per shipping data. A US blockade of Iranian ports has infuriated Tehran, prompting it to maintain its own restrictions on the strait, which had been typically handling roughly one-fifth of the world's oil and liquefied natural gas supply.

ations under the shadow of threats, and in the past two weeks, we have prepared to reveal new cards on the battlefield." Iran's powerful parliament speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf, who

is Iran's top negotiator in talks with the United States, wrote in a post on X.

He also threatened that Tehran had "new cards" if war resumes with the United States and Israel.



We do not accept negotiations under the shadow of threats, and in the last two weeks we have been preparing to show new cards on the battlefield.
—Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf, Iran parliament speaker

IN-SHORT

Iran tanker 'Silly City' slips past US Strait of Hormuz blockade.

Chemicals for missiles from China on US seized Iran ship? claims Nikki Haley, Indian-origin member of US President's Republican Party.

China's President Xi Jinping urges Hormuz reopening in rare call with Saudi De Facto ruler.

Iran's 'Pride and Prejudice'-coded message to Trump on peace talks.

Trump says currency swap with UAE is under consideration with an aim to help the nation.

Woman ties up boyfriend, sets him afire, watches him die

BENGALURU

In a chilling case that has shocked the city, a 27-year-old woman allegedly tied up her boyfriend under the pretext of a "western-style proposal" and set him on fire using kerosene, killing him in what police have described as a premeditated murder.

The incident came to light in the Byadarahalli police station limits, where investigators say the accused had carefully planned the killing after suspecting that her boyfriend was distancing himself from her. The victim, Kiran, had reportedly visited the woman, Prema, at her residence after she called him over, informing him that no one else was at home.

The couple had been in a relationship and worked together at a mobile store near Rajajinagar. Investigators suspect strained relationship may have pushed the woman to plan the fatal act.

14 killed in firecracker unit blast in Thrissur ahead of Pooram

THRISSUR

At least 13 workers were killed and five others sustained severe burn injuries after a powerful explosion ripped through a firecracker manufacturing unit linked to the Thiruvambady temple at Mundathikode in Keralam's Thrissur, where preparations were underway for the Thrissur Pooram.

As per officials, close to 70 labourers—most of them from Kundannur—were present at the facility when the blast occurred. The impact was so powerful that many nearby residents initially mistook it for an earthquake, as thick plumes of smoke engulfed the area. Sources said large quantities of explosive material, estimated to be around 2,000 kg, were stored at the unit.

At least 10 people were admitted to the Government Medical College Hospital Thrissur at Mulankunnathukavu. Hospital sources said a few of the injured are in criti-



cal condition.

The incident took place at a fireworks shed owned by Mundathikode Sathesh, the licensed manufacturer responsible for supplying fireworks to the Thiruvambadi Devaswom Board. Sathesh, who was also in charge of operations at the site, is among those seriously injured and has been admitted to Thrissur Medical College Hospital.

The incident took place at a fireworks shed owned by Satheesan from Mundathikode, the licensed manufacturer responsible for supplying fireworks to the Thiruvambadi Devaswom Board. He sustained burn injuries but

survived and is currently undergoing treatment. Among those killed are three coordinators from Kottappuram in Thrissur town, who were assisting the licensee in the final stages of firecracker preparation.

District Collector Shikha Surendran assigned the Sub-Divisional Magistrate and Thrissur RDO to probe into the incident.

Eyewitnesses reported that two large explosions were heard initially, followed by a series of continuing blasts as firecrackers stored at the site kept detonating. Locals said the sound of the explosions could be heard several kilometres away.

Compromise inevitable for CM in politics: Jarkiholi

BENGALURU

Observing Chief Minister Siddaramaiah's silence over action initiated against a couple of minority leaders — MLC Abdul Jabbar was suspended from the party and MLC Naseer Ahmed sacked as CM's political secretary — Minister Satish Jarkiholi on Tuesday said: "At certain point of time, compromise becomes inevitable in politics." Speaking in Mysuru, Jarkiholi said one "can't go strict at all

times." He added, "CM Siddaramaiah is as strict as ever."

Wonder if someone did black magic on

Siddaramaiah: Rajanna Senior Congress lawmaker K N Rajanna on Tuesday claimed 'black magic' may have left Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah politically helpless. He said this while building on his earlier statement lamenting Siddaramaiah's "helplessness" and not standing up for his party loyalists who have faced action.

GP faces FIR over ₹500 betting remark

TUMAKURU: A court has directed a probe and ordered the registration of an FIR against Home Minister G Parameshwara regarding his public statement about placing a Rs 500 bet during a kabaddi tournament in Tumakuru. During a state-level kabaddi tournament in October 2025, the HM admitted to the media that he lost a Rs 500 bet to District Collector Shubha Kalyan. Following this, a private complaint was filed by HR Nagabhushan, who argued that as the home minister's public admission of gambling—an illegal act—required legal action.



Tim Cook steps down as Apple CEO after 15-year run

CALIFORNIA

After spending 15 years at the helm of one of the world's most renowned companies, Apple CEO Tim Cook is stepping down and passing over the baton to John Ternus.

This change will take effect from September 1 2026. John Ternus, currently Apple's senior vice president of hardware engineering, will take over as chief executive.

Back in 2011, when Cook was appointed the CEO, he was faced with herculean task of making sure the company retains its hard-fought standing it had achieved under the visionary leadership of founder and CEO Steve Jobs.

A MODEL TO THE WORLD

India holds fuel prices steady despite global crude surge

NEW DELHI

Even after the escalation in the West Asia conflict and rise in Brent crude oil prices due to the closure of the Strait of Hormuz, the fuel prices remain unchanged in India, while many countries have witnessed a jump of up to 85%.

Data by Kotak highlighted a sharp divergence between India and both advanced and emerging countries, where consumers have faced increases in fuel prices so far this year. On the diesel front, prices have witnessed a sharp rise in several countries in recent months amid geopolitical tensions.



Country-wise, the UAE saw an increase of around 85%, followed by Australia and the United States, which recorded rises of more than 65% and 62%, respectively. Meanwhile, in Canada, Pakistan, France,

Sri Lanka and Britain, prices rose between 35% and 53%.

Moreover, countries where prices increased more modestly include China and Brazil, while Russia stands out as an exception, with diesel prices

rising only slightly — by over 1%.

In contrast, diesel prices in India have remained unchanged at Rs 87.6 per litre compared to January levels, indicating zero increase despite the US-Iran tensions.

A similar trend has been observed in petrol prices. Neighbouring Pakistan has seen the highest, a 44% jump in petrol prices, followed by the United States (42%) and the UAE (36%).

Meanwhile, petrol prices in Canada, Sri Lanka and China have risen by up to 34%, while Australia, Britain and France recorded relatively moderate gains.

Among countries with modest increases, Brazil and Russia reported hikes of over 7% and 1%, respectively.

In India, retail petrol prices have been kept at Rs 94.7 per litre compared to January levels, indicating no increase for consumers.

India's unchanged fuel prices highlight the degree of price stabilisation enabled by policy interventions and public-sector oil marketing company (OMC) pricing. Despite volatility in global fuel markets, Indian consumers have largely been shielded from the immediate pass-through of international price pressures.

India's pricing strategy

Frozen retail rates

Major state-run refiners have kept retail prices unchanged, with Delhi diesel steady at ₹87.67 and Mumbai at ₹90.03 per litre as of late April

GOVT ACTION

The government has engaged in a cushioning strategy, including a "big" excise duty cut on petrol/diesel and introducing new export duties on diesel and ATF to manage the price impact.

DIESEL PRICE HIKE

UAE - 85%
Australia - 65%
United States - 62%
Canada, Pakistan, France, Sri Lanka, Britain - 35%-53%
Russia - 1%
India - 0%

PETROL PRICE HIKE

Pakistan - 44%
United States - 42%
UAE 36%
Canada, Sri Lanka and China - 34%
Brazil - 7%
Russia - 1%
India - 0%



QUICK READ

**Police recover
snatched phone within
minutes in Bengaluru**

CH NEWS, BENGALURU
In a swift late-night operation, Hoysala police recovered a mobile phone within minutes after it was snatched near Ambedkar Nagar. The incident occurred around 11.58 pm when a delivery executive was allegedly targeted by a car driver following a road rage altercation. The accused snatched the phone and fled the scene. The victim immediately contacted the emergency helpline 112, prompting quick action from a Hoysala patrol team led by Assistant Sub-Inspector Venkataramu and Head Constable Anil Kumar. Police called the stolen number, warned the accused of legal consequences, and secured the phone's return. Both parties later reached a compromise.

**Vaastu guru files
extortion case after
sexual abuse allegations**

CH NEWS, BENGALURU
A city vaastu expert has filed an extortion complaint after being accused of sexually harassing and assaulting a woman who approached him for professional consultation. The cases have been registered at Govindarajanagar police station in west Bengaluru. According to the woman, the incident occurred on April 4 at a private office in Vijayanagar. The accused, identified as Shantakumar, allegedly assaulted her during the meeting. In a counter-complaint, Shantakumar accused the woman and her associates, Jamal and Amrutalingam, of attempting to blackmail him. Police said both angles are under investigation.

**Rottweiler attacks
constable in Kalyan
Nagar, leaves him injured**

CH NEWS, BENGALURU
A police constable was seriously injured after a Rottweiler attacked him in Kalyan Nagar while he was on a routine errand. Sadashiva Ingalagavi (49), attached to the BDA Special Task Force, had stopped on 1st Main Road to take a call when the dog, allegedly unleashed and without a muzzle, attacked him from behind and bit his right leg. The constable said he fought back and called for help before the owner intervened. Hoysala patrol rushed him to hospital. Police registered a case under Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita sections and will issue notice to the owner.

Bengaluru census drive opens doors for public, 1,000 enumerators to be hired

Civic body invites citizens to join Census 2027 work through interviews

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

In a significant step to streamline the upcoming census process, the Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA) has opened its doors to the public, announcing plans to recruit around 1,000 enumerators through a direct interview process. The initiative aims to ensure efficient and timely completion of Census 2027 activities while encouraging citizen participation in a key national exercise.

The selection process will be conducted at Town Hall, where eligible candidates will be shortlisted through interviews. Officials said the move is designed to attract youth

and qualified individuals by offering an honorarium and an opportunity to contribute to large-scale data collection work.

Applicants must have a minimum qualification of second PUC or higher and should possess a smartphone with at least Android 12 and 4GB RAM, as enumeration will be carried out digitally. Preference will be given to residents within BBMP limits, particularly from constituencies such as CV Raman Nagar, Shantinagar, Shivajinagar, Chamaraajpet, Chikka-pete and Gandhinagar.

Authorities have clarified that selected candidates must be willing to work continu-



ously, including on holidays, as the census schedule is already underway. The house listing and housing census phase began on April 16 and will continue until May 15, 2026. During this period, each

enumerator will be assigned around 150 to 200 households. An honorarium of ₹9,000 will be provided for this phase in line with Census 2027 guidelines.

The second phase is sched-

uled for February 2027, during which enumerators will collect detailed population data covering approximately 750 to 800 individuals or 150 to 200 households. For this stage, an honorarium of ₹16,000 will be paid.

Officials added that all selected candidates will undergo mandatory training before being deployed in the field to ensure accuracy and consistency in data collection. The GBA emphasised that the recruitment is temporary and strictly limited to census work, with no assurance of permanent employment. Final selection will be made at the discretion of the GBA Commissioner.



City hotels explore biogas to cut LPG reliance and waste costs

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

Hotels and restaurants in Bengaluru are increasingly turning to biogas as an alternative fuel source, seeking to reduce dependence on LPG and manage rising waste disposal costs more efficiently.

The shift comes amid concerns over higher wet waste charges under the empanelled vendor system introduced by Bangalore Solid Waste Management Ltd, where rates are capped at ₹12 per kg but remain negotiable.

Industry stakeholders fear that vendors may push prices higher, significantly increasing operational expenses for bulk waste generators. The hospitality sector, which contributes nearly 40% of the city's total waste, sees biogas as a viable solution to convert food waste into usable energy for kitchens.

Most hotels generate over 100 kg of waste daily and fall under the bulk waste category. Earlier, waste disposal was handled through lump-sum payments, but the revised pricing structure has prompted a rethink among businesses. Bengaluru Hotels Association (BHA) Honorary President P.C. Rao said the additional burden of waste disposal charges, combined with existing taxes and commercial expenses, is becoming unsustainable for the sector.

In response, the association is exploring plans to set up decentralised biogas plants across different parts of the city.

After three decades, intermediate ring road project back on development table

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

The Karnataka government has revived the long-pending Intermediate Ring Road (IRR) project, nearly three decades after it was first conceptualised, in a renewed push to improve regional connectivity and decongest Bengaluru's expanding urban core.

To be implemented by the Bengaluru Metropolitan Regional Development Authority (BMRDA), the 210-km corridor aims to link 12 key satellite towns, including Thattakere, Harohalli, Bidadi, Tavarekere, Nelamangala, Devanahalli, Hoskote, Dommasandra and Anekal. The project is expected to create a seamless mobility loop connecting emerging growth centres on the city's outskirts.

Originally proposed in 2007, the IRR project had remained stalled due to land acquisition hurdles and prolonged litigation. However, following directions from Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar, officials have now revived the plan with a revised approach to minimise legal and logistical challenges.

Urban development department records indicate that parts of the earlier alignment were contested in court, prompting the High Court in August 2022 to direct a realignment. A revised plan was subsequently drawn up in



Officials said funding options for implementation are being explored. The IRR will complement major infrastructure initiatives such as the 228-km STRR project, the proposed Bengaluru Business Corridor, and multiple corridor developments aimed at transforming regional mobility.

March 2023, but inconsistencies in road width—ranging from 9 metres to 30 metres against the planned 90 metres—led to further reconsideration.

In December, a high-level review meeting chaired by Shivakumar resulted in a decision to revert largely to the original 2007 alignment with selective modifications. Officials said the earlier alignment had already been integrated into multiple master plans, reducing the likelihood

of fresh disputes.

The updated plan also ensures better integration with existing infrastructure, including the Nelamangala Town Ring Road and the Satellite Town Ring Road (STRR), particularly along the Anekal-Hoskote stretch. Authorities have also worked to minimise disruption to existing layouts while maintaining connectivity objectives.

One of the key advantages of the revived project is its cost efficiency. Officials noted that land falling within approved layouts could be obtained through relinquishment deeds from developers, significantly reducing the burden of acquisition costs on the government.

BMRDA Commissioner Rajendra Cholan said the authority already holds 175 acres and will pursue additional land as required. The IRR is expected to bridge critical gaps between the STRR and the proposed Peripheral Ring Road, accelerating development in surrounding townships.

Export hit, eatery shutdowns deepen onion price crash

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

A temporary shutdown of eateries triggered by LPG shortages has intensified an ongoing crash in onion prices across Karnataka, pushing rates well below production costs and leaving farmers and traders in distress amid oversupply and weak demand.

Wholesale onion prices have dropped sharply to ₹500–₹1,000 per quintal, compared to earlier rates of ₹1,200–₹2,000. Retail prices have also fallen significantly, with 8–10 kg now selling for around ₹100. The sharp decline has been attributed to reduced demand from the food services sector and a bumper harvest driven by favourable rainfall. Farmers in

key producing districts such as Vijayapura, Chitradurga, Gadag, Ballari, Koppal, Dharwad, Belagavi, Bagalkot, Haveri and Chikkaballapur are facing distress sales, with Chitradurga among the worst affected regions.

Srirama Reddy, President of the Dasanapura APMC Merchants' Association, said nearly 30% of hotels have temporarily shut operations, significantly reducing demand. He added that even premium-quality onions, which earlier fetched ₹20 per kg, are now selling for nearly half that price.

The downturn has also impacted other vegetables, with traders reporting a broader slump in market prices. APMC trader Shiva Kumar

noted that the closure of eateries has reduced overall consumption, dragging down rates across produce categories. Export-oriented Bengaluru rose onions have also taken a hit, with prices falling to ₹600–₹800 per quintal. Farmers in Bengaluru Rural, Chikkaballapur and Kolar districts, who depend on exports to Gulf countries, are particularly affected.

B. Madhu, a farmer from Byrganahalli, said he harvested 400 bags of rose onions for export via Chennai, but a decline in demand following geopolitical tensions in Iran led to a price crash. With limited storage options, farmers are struggling to prevent spoilage, as onions begin to rot within a month.

7 years in the making, Victoria Hospital's 10-storey Q-block to open on May 2

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

Nearly seven years after construction began, the 10-storey Q-block at Victoria Hospital is set to be inaugurated on May 2, significantly expanding capacity at one of Karnataka's busiest public healthcare facilities.

The new block will add 629 beds to the hospital's existing strength of around 1,000, offering relief to thousands of patients who depend on the institution daily. Victoria Hospital currently records an Out Patient Department (OPD) footfall of 700 to 1,000 patients every day. Officials believe the additional infrastructure will ease congestion, reduce waiting time and improve overall patient care. Medical Education Minister Sharan Prakash Patil said the facility will play a key role in strengthening public healthcare delivery in the city.

The first five floors of the Q-block will house general wards catering to departments such as general surgery, orthopaedics and



medicine. The next two floors will accommodate special wards and operation theatres, including a dedicated VIP section. Two additional floors have been earmarked for a surgical complex equipped with eight operation theatres.

Hospital authorities also plan to develop a helipad on the terrace in the future, further enhancing emergency response capabilities. However, the inclusion of the helipad and other facilities has reduced the originally planned capacity of 1,000 beds in the new building. In a recent review, the minister directed officials to convert one floor into an intensive care unit (ICU) complex. Authorities are currently assessing how to integrate ICU facilities

without affecting other services.

The project has also seen a rise in costs, with the initial estimate of ₹68 crore increasing to ₹90 crore over the years due to delays and additional infrastructure requirements.

Dr S. Deepak, Medical Superintendent of Victoria Hospital, said tenders for procurement of beds and medical equipment have already been floated, and recruitment of nurses, Group D staff and other personnel is underway.

Equipment for two floors has already been delivered, while the remaining installations are in progress. The orthopaedics department is expected to shift from the old block to the new facility once operations begin.

BURDEN FOR BOOZERS

Liquor with higher alcohol content to cost more under new excise rule

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

Alcoholic beverages with higher alcohol content are set to become costlier in Karnataka, while lower-strength variants may turn relatively cheaper under a proposed overhaul of the state's excise policy that links duty directly to alcohol content.

According to Excise Commissioner R. Venkatesh Kumar, the state is introducing a first-of-its-kind taxation system based on Alcohol by Vol-

ume (ABV) per litre, replacing the existing structure tied to maximum retail price (MRP). Under the draft amendment, stronger liquor will attract higher taxes, potentially reshaping pricing across segments.

Excise Minister R.B. Thimmapur said the draft notification issued under the Karnataka Excise Act, 1965, has been opened for public objections and suggestions for seven days. The final framework will be notified after stake-



holder consultations, with the government balancing revenue considerations and market impact.

He clarified that the base duty of ₹1,000 per litre of pure alcohol will remain unchanged, while additional ex-

cise duties will be recalibrated under the new system.

The proposal also reduces the number of duty slabs from 16 to eight, ranging from ₹50 per litre of pure alcohol in lower segments to ₹3,700 for premium categories priced above ₹5,000. Beer will fall under separate slabs ranging between ₹800 and ₹2,700.

Market response to the announcement was positive, with shares of major liquor companies rising during intr-

aday trade. Industry experts believe the shift could further drive premiumisation trends across categories such as whisky, gin, vodka, rum and brandy. Abneesh Roy of Nu-vama Institutional Equities noted that whisky in India typically ranges between 36 percent and 50 percent ABV, while beer varies from 4 to 8 percent. Premium imported spirits and Indian single malts often have higher strengths, making them more sensitive to the proposed tax

changes. Federation of Wine Merchants' Association General Secretary B. Govindaraj Hegde said the impact on pricing will vary.

Lower-priced categories could see a 15–20 percent increase, while premium segments may witness marginal reductions depending on alcohol strength adjustments.

Officials added that concessional rates will continue for defence and paramilitary canteens under the revised structure.

QUICK READ



Prostitution racket busted, six women rescued in city raids

CH NEWS, BENGALURU
The Central Crime Branch (CCB) busted a prostitution racket operating out of spas and a house in Bengaluru, rescuing six women and arresting four accused, including three women. The operation was carried out by the Women Protection Wing based on credible intelligence gathered over multiple days. Police said the racket functioned in spas in Marathahalli and near Sunkadakatte, besides a house in Manjunatha Nagar. Raids at these locations led to the rescue of women allegedly forced into prostitution. Authorities stated that the accused had been running the illegal operation by coercing and exploiting victims. Further investigation is underway.

Late-night bike theft caught on CCTV

CH NEWS, BENGALURU
Bike theft incidents are on the rise in Nelamangala, with miscreants targeting high-end vehicles in residential areas. In a recent case, an expensive KTM bike was stolen from outside a house in Weavers Colony. The bike, owned by Chandan, was allegedly taken in a pre-planned manner by unidentified thieves. The entire incident was captured on CCTV cameras, providing crucial leads for the investigation. Residents have expressed concern over increasing thefts of premium bikes in the area. A case has been registered at Nelamangala Town police station, and efforts are underway to trace and apprehend the accused.

Fire breaks out in moving KSRTC bus, passengers escape unhurt

CH NEWS, BENGALURU
Panic gripped commuters after a fire broke out in a moving KSRTC bus near Freedom Park on the Bengaluru–Tirupati route. The blaze is suspected to have originated in the engine compartment while the vehicle was in motion. The bus was carrying over 20 passengers at the time. Acting swiftly, the conductor ensured all passengers were safely evacuated, preventing injuries. Eyewitnesses reported visible flames from the engine area, raising safety concerns. Authorities were alerted immediately, and no casualties were reported. Officials are expected to inspect the vehicle to determine the exact cause of the fire.

HC orders marks instead of grades for third languages, setback for state

The High Court has directed continuation of marks system for third languages

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

In a significant setback to the state government, the High Court has directed that marks—not grades—must be awarded for third languages, including Hindi, in the SSLC examination for the academic year 2025–26. The ruling effectively halts the government’s attempt to introduce a grading system mid-process.

A single-judge bench of Justice E.S. Indiresch disposed of the state’s review petition, observing that any such major change in evaluation policy must be clearly specified in the examination notification itself. The court noted that the government had introduced grading without framing proper rules or notifying stu-



dents in advance, making the move procedurally flawed.

The bench emphasised that altering the marking scheme after issuing the SSLC notification was not appropriate. It ruled that the existing system of awarding marks must continue for third languages, in-

cluding Hindi, for the current academic year.

The state had approached the court seeking a review of an earlier order passed on April 15, which had similarly directed authorities to stick to marks instead of grades. The government argued that the

shift to grading was aimed at reducing academic pressure, particularly as over one lakh students were reportedly failing in Hindi. It also maintained that steps were being taken to amend the Karnataka Secondary Education Examination Board (KSEAB) rules through a draft notification issued on April 10.

Advocate General Shashikaran Shetty, representing the government, submitted that grading would promote equity between rural and urban students and serve as a reform-oriented measure. However, the court was not convinced, pointing out that such policy changes must follow due legal process and cannot be implemented abruptly.

The original petition chal-

lenging the grading system was filed by students Sahana R. Naik from Chikkamagaluru and Anusha and Sudhiksha from Udupi. They contended that the sudden shift in evaluation would affect transparency and fairness.

The court also noted that failure to communicate policy changes properly leads to confusion among students and unnecessary litigation. It added that the government is free to implement grading in future, but only after framing rules and notifying stakeholders in advance. With this ruling, the marks-based system will remain in place for SSLC third language subjects this academic year, ensuring continuity and clarity for students across Karnataka.



Cyber fraud alert as scammers use top cop’s photo on WhatsApp

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

A fresh cyber fraud attempt has surfaced in Bengaluru, with fraudsters impersonating the city’s Police Commissioner on WhatsApp to cheat people by demanding money.

According to police, the accused used the photograph of Seemant Kumar Singh as the display picture on a mobile number to create a fake identity. Messages were then sent to multiple individuals, seeking financial assistance under false pretences.

The use of a senior officer’s image made the account appear credible, allowing the fraudsters to exploit trust and attempt to dupe recipients. Several people reportedly received such messages, leading to suspicion and formal complaints.

Police officials said the impersonation of a high-ranking officer has made the case particularly serious, as it involves elements of cheating and identity misuse. A case has been registered at the cyber crime police station, and an investigation is underway to trace the origin of the mobile number and identify those involved.

Authorities have urged citizens to exercise caution while responding to unexpected messages, even if they appear to come from known or influential individuals. People are advised to verify the authenticity of such requests through official channels before taking any action.

SIT probe in Bitcoin case delayed, interim report sought: Home Minister Parameshwara

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

Karnataka Home Minister G Parameshwara on Tuesday acknowledged delays in the Special Investigation Team (SIT) probe into the high-profile Bitcoin case and said the government has now sought an interim report to expedite the process.

Speaking to reporters, Parameshwara said both he and Chief Minister Siddaramaiah have instructed officials to speed up the investigation. “The SIT probe has been delayed. We have asked them to submit an interim report and complete the investigation at the earliest,” he said.

He also indicated that central agencies such as the Enforcement Directorate may have already received inputs

from the SIT. “The ED should clarify its findings in the Bitcoin case. There are allegations involving individuals with influential backgrounds, but we must focus on establishing the truth,” he added. Responding to recent ED raids linked to the case, the minister said the agency had conducted searches at premises associated with the sons of MLA NA Harris. “We do not know the internal details of the raids. The ED itself should issue a statement explaining the action,” he said. The Bitcoin case revolves around alleged illegal cryptocurrency transactions and links to hacker Srikrishna, also known as Sriki, which had triggered political controversy in the state earlier. Despite the formation of an

In a related development, ED officials conducted early morning raids at multiple locations in Bengaluru, including properties linked to Mohammed Nalapad and others, over alleged connections to the Bitcoin case.



SIT, no chargesheet has been filed so far, raising concerns over the pace of the probe. Parameshwara also addressed other issues, including allegations of harassment of Dalit officers. He said he has directed the Director General of Police to submit a detailed report. “We will take action after verifying the facts,” he stated, adding that separate re-

ports have also been sought in related cases from district officials.

On political developments, the minister said the party would internally discuss concerns raised by minority groups regarding representation. He reiterated that the government has consistently provided opportunities to minority communities.

Sports meet inaugurated as part of Vasavi Jayanti celebrations

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

A vibrant sports meet marking the fifth anniversary of Vasavi Jayanti was inaugurated in the city, bringing together participants from various age groups for a day of competition and community bonding.

Chairman of the Karnataka State Bioenergy Development Board and Karnataka Pradesh Congress Committee Vice President SE Sudheendra inaugurated the event, which featured a range of activities for children, adults, couples and senior citizens.

Children in age groups of 6–10, 10–12 and 12–15 years participated enthusiastically in indoor sports competitions, while separate events were organised for youth and couples.

Organisers said the competitions were de-



signed to encourage participation across generations and promote a healthy lifestyle. Winners were honoured during the concluding celebrations of the fifth Vasavi Jayanti.

Addressing the gathering, Sudheendra appreciated the efforts of the organisers and highlighted the role of such events in fostering unity and holistic development. He noted that the Vasavi Sangha has been actively promoting cultural, edu-

cational, economic and sports initiatives for the overall growth of the Arya Vaishya community.

He also congratulated Sangha President S.N. Kupparaj Shetty and coordinator Sindhu for successfully organising the programme.

The event witnessed participation from several dignitaries, community leaders and members of the Arya Vaishya Samaj, making it a lively and inclusive celebration.

BDA RECOVERS PROPERTY WORTH ₹43 CRORE

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

The Bangalore Development Authority (BDA) on Tuesday reclaimed encroached land worth approximately Rs 43 crore at Nadaprabhu Kempegowda Layout, Block-2. The operation targeted unauthorized constructions built on Survey No. 22/2 in Mangalahalli village. Officials demolished the illegal structures and recovered nearly 2 acres of land during the drive.

The operation was led by the BDA Taskforce, along

with Engineer Officer-1, Executive Engineer and Assistant Executive Engineer, in



coordination with local police. Authorities said such drives will continue to protect public property and prevent further encroachments in key development zones.

After months of complaints, Bannerghatta Road gets fresh asphalt

CH NEWS, BENGALURU

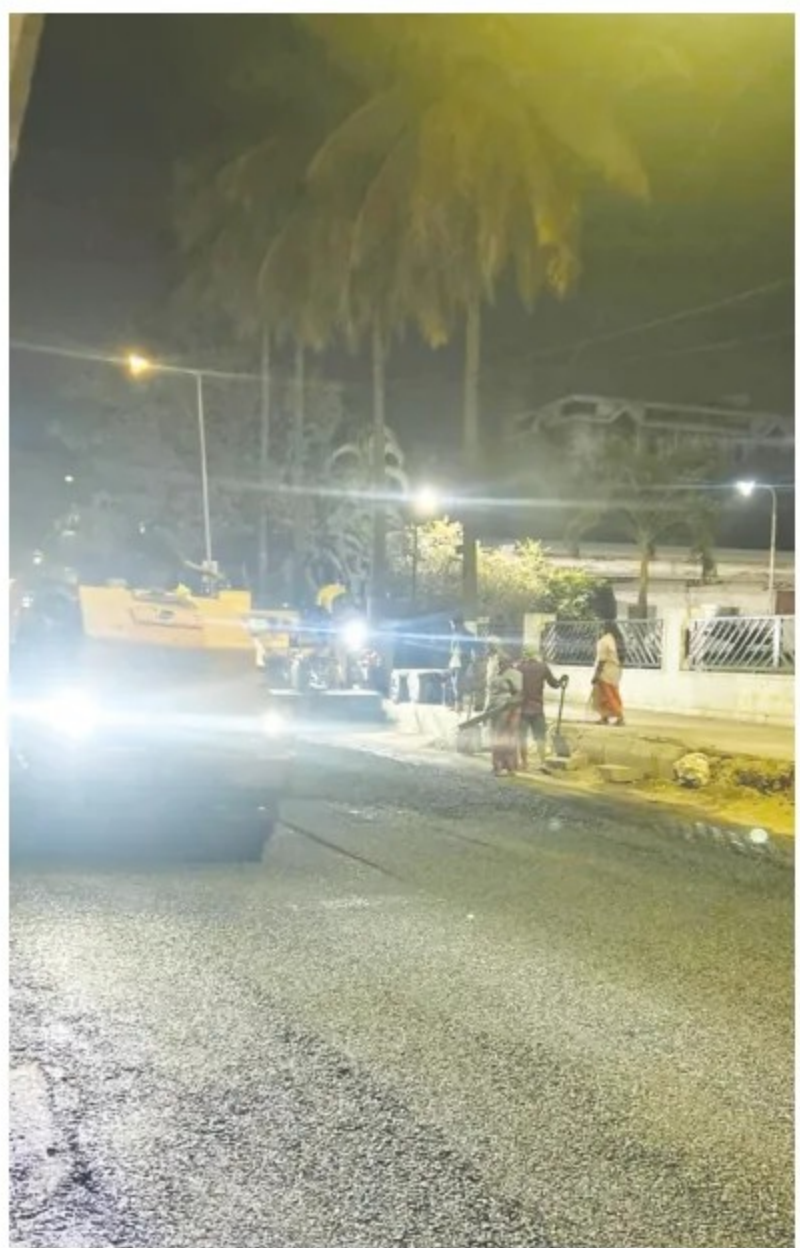
After months of public complaints and social media criticism, authorities have finally begun asphaltting a damaged stretch of Bannerghatta Road, bringing relief to commuters while also raising questions over the delay in execution.

The South City Corporation has taken up repair work on a 1.5-kilometre stretch that had deteriorated significantly, causing inconvenience to motorists and residents. The move comes despite funds having been allocated earlier, prompting citizens to question

why the work was not initiated sooner.

Corporation Commissioner K.N. Ramesh, in an official statement, attributed the poor condition of the road to drainage pipeline work undertaken by the Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board (BWSSB). He assured that the stretch is now being restored and will be fully asphalted without further delays.

According to officials, a one-kilometre portion—from Kalyani Choultry on Bannerghatta Main Road to the IIMB metro station—has already



been resurfaced. Work on the remaining stretch is currently underway and is expected to be completed by tomorrow night. Once completed, the road will be reopened for regular traffic movement.

The delay had earlier sparked confusion over jurisdiction. Engineers from the South Corporation had initially stated that the road fell under the purview of Namma Metro, citing ongoing infrastructure work along the corridor. This lack of clarity further slowed down repair efforts, leaving commuters to deal with potholes and uneven

surfaces for months.

Residents say the episode highlights persistent coordination gaps between civic agencies and infrastructure bodies in Bengaluru. Many have pointed out that better planning and inter-departmental coordination could have prevented prolonged inconvenience. While the ongoing asphaltting work has been welcomed as long-overdue relief, citizens are urging authorities to ensure accountability and adopt a more proactive approach to road maintenance in the future to avoid similar delays.

LALITH CASTLE INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL

Affiliated to CBSE, New Delhi (Affiliation No: 830998)

#102/1, H.V Halli, Rajarajeshwari Nagar, Bangalore -560 098

CBSE RESULTS - 2026

DISTINCTION ACHIEVERS

100% RESULTS

Dr. B.A. Kalashankar
Chairman and Director

 ATHENA MOHANTY 94.4%	 ADITI JAIN 94.2%	 VALLEPALLI NEERAJA SRI HARIKA 93.8%	 DISHA P BHARADWAJ 93.6%
 BHAVYA VERMA 93%	 DEENATH RAJ M 92.8%	 THANISHA S 91.4%	 SPANDANA S PATIL 90%
 JYOTHSNA V G 89.8%	 SADHANA J 88.8%	 ANVI SUCHINDRAAN 87.8%	 ANVITHA SHREYA R 86.4%
 VADARIA NAITRI ASHVINHAI 83.8%	 AFRA H 82.4%	 THAMOGNA M KASHYAP 80.4%	 CHARVI N GOWDA 80.2%

QUICK READ

Walk-in interview for jobs scheduled in Udupi

UDUPI

A direct interview for various posts will be held on April 23 at 10.30 am at Axis Maxlife, Pragati Business Park, Kunjibettu Croma Building. Candidates with PUC, ITI, or degree qualifications can attend. Applicants must carry mark sheets, a resume, and a copy of Aadhaar card. The recruitment aims to provide job opportunities for eligible candidates in the region. For more details, candidates can contact the District Employment Exchange Office at the Deputy Commissioner Complex in Manipal. Officials have shared contact numbers for inquiries. Job seekers are encouraged to attend and explore available opportunities at the interview venue.

Chitradurga to celebrate Rajkumar birthday with events

CHITRADURGA

The 97th birth anniversary of Dr. Rajkumar will be celebrated on April 24 at 10.30 am in Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Auditorium, Patrika Bhavan. The event is jointly organised by the district administration, Zilla Panchayat, and various departments and associations. Minister D. Sudhakar will inaugurate the programme. MLA K.C. Veerendra Pappu will preside over the function. Several public representatives and officials will attend. A lecture by Dr. Naveen Maskal and cultural performances, including songs of Dr. Rajkumar by K. Gangadhar's team, are planned. Officials said the event aims to honour the legendary actor's legacy and cultural impact on Kannada cinema.

Applications open for bachelor of visual arts course

UDUPI

Chamarajendra Government College of Visual Arts, affiliated with Mysore University, has invited online applications for the four-year Bachelor of Visual Arts (BVA) course for the current academic year.

The programme offers specialisations in painting, sculpture, graphic arts, applied arts, art history, photography, and photojournalism. Students who have completed Second PUC or an equivalent qualification are eligible to apply. The last date to submit applications is May 30. Interested candidates can download forms and check details on official websites or contact the college office. Officials said the course helps students build creative and professional skills in arts field.

DK announces massive Gundlupet development Drive

DCM DK Shivakumar said jobs were given to Chamarajanagar oxygen tragedy victims' families, fulfilling Congress promises and compensation

GUNDLUPET

DCM D K Shivakumar said the government has fulfilled its promise by giving jobs to family members of victims of the Chamarajanagar oxygen tragedy at the district hospital. He said seeing the smiles of bereaved families made the government work meaningful.

He spoke at the foundation stone laying and inauguration of projects to fill 110 lakes and other development works in Gundlupet taluk of Chamarajanagar district.

He said justice and promises made during the previous BJP government period regarding Covid deaths have been fulfilled by Congress governance. He mentioned that during Covid many lives were lost and compensation

was given to families to support them.

He said the government has announced Rs 1000 crore for Gundlupet development and Rs 475 crore to fill 110 lakes. He listed welfare schemes like free bus travel for women Rs 2000 monthly aid 10 kg rice free electricity up to 200 units and unemployment allowance.

He said the government spends about one lakh crore rupees every year on welfare and development programmes. He also said the Mekedatu project detailed project report will be submitted to the Centre within ten days for approval.

He added that the Congress government is working to ensure water security social justice and development across



Karnataka. He criticised previous governments and said Congress schemes are inclusive and benefit all eligible people without discrimination.

He said leaders and MLAs in the region are working together to strengthen development and public welfare programmes. He concluded by saying the government aims to build a hunger free poverty free and equal society with

public support.

He recalled campaigning during the Bharat Jodo Yatra with Rahul Gandhi and said promises made to Gundlupet voters are being fulfilled step by step.

He praised local leadership and said development works will continue with focus on irrigation roads and livelihoods.

He said the government has already started work offices and identified land for implementing the Mekedatu project after central approval and urged opposition leaders to support constructive development instead of criticism.

He expressed confidence that Karnataka will progress under Congress governance with public cooperation and blessings from people.

Dr Danamma says just society Through Sharan

KOPPAL

Dr Danamma Jhalaki said Sharan gave idea of a just society by respecting all professions and valuing work culture. She was speaking at Basava Jayanti Basavagoshti held at Gavi Math in Koppal on April 20 under district administration.

She said Sharan society carried seeds of democracy and spread equality through vachana teachings.

Maleshankar local office announced by Tabrez Alam Sharif to address Western Ghats issues, easing residents' grievances access

Local office planned to address Ghats issues

SHIVAMOGGA

Decision to set up a local office in Maleshankar has been announced by Mohammad Tabrez Alam Sharif, chairman of the Western Ghats Conservation Task Force Committee.

He spoke to reporters after a preliminary meeting held at the District Administration Office on Tuesday regarding a program planned for May. Sharif said he will personally visit the area to hear problems faced by local people including drinking water shortages and issues of tribal communities.

He explained that many residents find it difficult to travel to Bengaluru to submit complaints, so a local office will make communication easier. He added that Karnataka leads in conserving the Western Ghats and was the first state to form such a committee in 2008.

Efforts include strict rules



on plastic use, plans for green check posts, and a proposal for a museum on the Ghats. Awareness programs for youth and steps to protect dense forests are also being promoted. A request has been sent to declare key forest areas as heritage sites.

Officials are also studying the rise of homestays and resorts and preparing rules to manage them responsibly. Sharif noted that the High Court has stayed the Sharavati pumped storage project and said any harmful project will be reviewed.

District forest officials shared that the region has several forest divisions and wildlife sanctuaries, including Shettyhalli, Sharavathi and Gudavi. The meeting was attended by senior district officers and forest staff.

Further discussions will be held with departments like tourism, mining and geology to ensure balanced development and environmental protection in the sensitive Western Ghats region going forward with proper planning and community support always.

Udupi CET exams to follow strict guidelines

UDUPI

District Magistrate Swaroop T. K. has directed officials to ensure smooth and fair conduct of the Common Entrance Test examinations scheduled on April 23 and 24.

He chaired a preparatory meeting at the District Office in Rajatadri, Manipal, and stressed maintaining the sanctity of the examination while ensuring a student friendly environment.

The CET will be conducted across 23 centres in Udupi district including Udupi, Kundapur and Karkala taluks, with around 8,746 students expected to appear. Officials said 11 centres are in Udupi, five in Karkala and seven in Kundapur.

Students have been instructed to reach centres at

least two and a half hours before the exam. Electronic items such as mobile phones, watches and other devices are strictly banned inside examination halls. Authorities will appoint observers and supervisors at each centre, and a 200 metre radius around centres will be declared a restricted zone with police security. Health staff will be present and ORS packets stocked

considering summer conditions. Arrangements for drinking water, electricity supply and clocks in exam rooms have been made. CCTV cameras and webcasting will be used to monitor the process. Officials also said question papers and answer sheets will be securely stored under police protection to ensure transparency and fairness throughout the examination process.



DELIMITATION BILL DISPUTE

Ratnakar challenges BJP leaders to open debate

SHIVAMOGGA

Former minister Kimmane Ratnakar said he is ready to openly discuss ideological issues with the Bharatiya Janata Party, including the women's reservation matter. Addressing a press conference, he challenged MP B. Y. Raghavendra and MLAs Araga Jnanendra, B. Y. Vijayendra, and S. N. Channabasappa to come forward and answer his questions. Ratnakar alleged that the BJP does not truly respect women and has introduced the women's reservation bill



for political gain. He criticised the linking of the bill with constituency delimitation, saying both issues should be handled separately. He questioned how a single

vote could decide two different bills and called the move confusing and unfair. He also asked why the bill was introduced in a hurry instead of waiting until after upcoming

state elections. Ratnakar further condemned remarks made by BJP leaders against AICC President Mallikarjun Kharge, saying his statements were related to ideology, not individuals. Raising concerns about caste discrimination, he questioned how long Dalits would continue to face inequality within society. Several Congress leaders, including R. Prasannakumar, Kalagodu Ratnakar, Ramesh Hegde, Kesturu Manjunath, and Amarnath Shetty, were present at the press meet and supported his statements.



Irrigation project brings hope to Bidar farmers

BIDAR

MLA Dr. Shailendra Beldale said providing irrigation facilities to farmers is his duty, commitment, and firm resolve while launching a new irrigation project in Bidar South constituency.

The project, taken up under the 2026-27 plan by the Karnataka Irrigation Department, will supply water to nearly 400 acres of farmland in Bapur village at a cost of ₹5 crore.

Speaking at the event, Beldale said India is an agricultural country and farmers are its backbone, but many still struggle due to water scarcity. He stressed that improving irrigation is essential to support farmers and ensure steady crop production.

He said the new project will increase agricultural output, raise farmers' income, and improve their overall living conditions. It will also contribute to rural development by strengthening the local economy.

Beldale added that both the Central and State governments are committed to farmer welfare and that more de-

velopment projects will be implemented in the coming days.

He highlighted that ensuring water supply is not only the government's responsibility but also a collective duty.

"If there is water, there is crop, and if there is crop, there is life," he said, urging everyone to recognize the importance of water conservation.

The MLA reaffirmed his focus on delivering water to farmland, improving livelihoods, and supporting farmers through continuous development work.

Several local leaders and community members attended the program and expressed support for the initiative.

The event marked a significant step toward addressing water issues in the region and strengthening agriculture in Bidar South constituency.



Severe heatwave grips Mysuru district region

MYSURU

Severe heat conditions continue across Mysuru district as temperatures rise sharply. H.D. Kote recorded near 40 degrees Celsius, while Nanjangud and surrounding taluks also reported high temperatures. Residents in Mysuru district are finding daytime heat difficult and staying indoors during peak hours. Karnataka State Natural Disaster Monitoring Centre data shows fluctuating temperatures across regions. Officials said a low heat risk alert is expected for next three days. Health experts advise elderly people, children and pregnant women to avoid outdoor exposure between 11 a.m. and 4 p.m. They recommend drinking water, staying in shade and following safety guidance during summer heat.

The district administration has urged precautions to protect vulnerable groups from

heat stress. Mysuru district continues to monitor weather changes as residents hope for relief soon. Tourist areas and rural regions have also been experiencing similar heat conditions affecting daily life. Authorities under KSNDMC have activated heat action planning measures to reduce risk and improve preparedness.

People are encouraged to follow official advisories and avoid unnecessary travel during peak heat hours. Simple precautions are expected to help reduce heat-related illnesses across the district this summer season. Officials said community awareness, timely warnings and hydration practices remain key to ensuring public safety during extreme heat conditions in Mysuru region overall. Authorities continue monitoring weather updates and urge residents to stay safe and cautious at all times.

WOMEN GRAM SABHA PROMOTES RIGHTS AWARENESS IN BALLARI

BALLARI

A special women's Gram Sabha was held at Nidugurthi Gram Panchayat in Sandur taluk to spread awareness about women's rights and safety. The meeting saw active participation from women of nearby villages, aiming to promote empowerment and legal awareness in rural areas.

Gram Panchayat Development Officer Srikanth, who presided over the event, explained important laws related to women's safety and child protection. He spoke about the Prevention of Child Mar-

riage Act, gender equality, and measures to prevent violence against women.

He urged women to understand their rights and take legal action without fear in case of injustice. He also encouraged them to speak up and support each other in difficult situations. Awareness sessions were conducted on the harmful effects of child marriage, ways to prevent domestic violence, and the importance of education and independence for women. Participants were also informed about various government schemes available for women's welfare and

how they can benefit from them. Women from self help groups of villages like Huli-kunte, Girenahalli, Kondapur, Mallapur, Uttaramalai, and Katanikambhu attended the program in large numbers. Officials and staff members of the Gram Panchayat also took part and supported the initiative. The event highlighted the importance of confidence and active participation of women in social and community development. Organizers said such Gram Sabhas play a key role in building awareness and strengthening women at the grassroots level.

QUICK READ

KSRTC bus overturns near Tumakuru, injures passengers

TUMAKURU
A KSRTC bus overturned near M.H. Pattana in Gubbi taluk after the driver reportedly lost control of the vehicle. The bus was travelling from Gubbi towards Tumakuru when the accident occurred. Around 50 passengers were on board, including women, children, and students. Many suffered minor injuries but avoided serious harm. All the injured were immediately shifted to Gubbi Government Public Hospital for first aid and treatment. Officials said the bus went off the road and toppled on its side. Police have visited the spot and are investigating the cause of the accident further.



Court canteen applications open in Holalkere

CHITRADURGA
Applications have been invited from interested hoteliers to run a canteen in the Holalkere Taluk Court premises for public use. The notification has been issued by the Principal District and Sessions Judge of Chitradurga. Applicants must submit sealed quotations with food items, prices, and details before 5 pm on April 27. The bids will be opened on April 28 at 5 pm in the presence of the District Judge. The selected operator will get an 11-month licence, extendable up to three years. A security deposit of Rs.25,000 is required. The canteen must follow strict hygiene rules and court timings.

Mandya DC reviews digital census progress

MANDYA
Deputy Commissioner Dr. Kumar inspected the on-going digital census work in Mandya city and reviewed its progress. The census, being conducted from April 2026 in digital format, is aimed at collecting accurate population data. During the visit, the DC urged citizens to cooperate with officials and provide correct information when they come to households. He said public support is important for smooth and accurate completion of the census process. Mandya Sub-Divisional Officer M. Shivamurthy, Municipal Commissioner Pampashree, and other officials were present during the inspection and review meeting in the city.

CM highlights Basava Jayanti social reform message

CM marked Basava Jayanti in Hunsur, praising Basavanna's equality ideals, announcing cultural leader status, and promoting his philosophy beyond caste and religion.

HUNSUR

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah said the government is celebrating Basava Jayanti in Hunsur with devotion and respect for Basavanna, the social reformer who fought caste inequality. He spoke at the Basava Jayanti and Basavawara inauguration event at Madahalli Math led by Basava Samiti president Handanahalli Somashekar and former MLA H.P. Manjunath. He said Basavanna wanted a casteless and classless society and identified himself with the oppressed to promote

equality and social justice. He added that equality fraternity and justice are also the foundation of the Constitution and Basavanna's ideals reflect them. He said the cabinet had declared Basavanna a cultural leader and government orders were issued to display his photo in offices. He noted Basava Jayanti is now celebrated even abroad and the philosophy goes beyond caste and religion boundaries. During the programme, MLA Harish Gowda raised issues including irrigation, sewage entering Lakshmana Theertha river, hospital development,



and upgrading Hunsur infrastructure. Former MLA H.P. Manjunath praised the development work in the region and thanked the Chief Minister for progress in the area. Religious leaders and ministers including several swamis and officials attended the

programme. The event also saw participation from Shivaratri Deshikendra Swamiji of Suttur Math, Madahalli Math seer, Gavadagere Math seer, and state leaders. They emphasized unity and development goals for Hunsur region and called for continued.



JDS leads protest over women reservation bill

RAMANAGARA

JDS party workers held a protest in Ramanagara on Tuesday against the Congress-led INDIA alliance over its stand on the women's reservation bill in the Lok Sabha. The protest took place at Ijoor Circle and was led by former MLA A. Manjunath and district president H.C. Jayamuthu. Leaders said the opposition to the bill is an injustice to women and affects their representation. A. Manjunath said the party has opposed a law meant to strengthen women's political rights and representation. He said the protest is symbolic and aims to highlight the issue of women's political empowerment. H.C. Jayamuthu said earlier governments supported women's reservation and criticized the Congress for its stand. Protesters expressed anger and said voters would respond in future elections. The demonstration also included slogans and participation from several women leaders and party workers. Participants accused the Congress of weakening women's rights through its policy decisions.

JD(S) workers protested in Ramanagara against INDIA alliance over women's reservation bill stand, calling it anti-women and demanding stronger political representation

Leaders from different parts of the district attended the protest and supported the cause. The event concluded with calls for stronger support for women's reservation in politics. Organizers said the protest was part of a statewide movement to demand clarity and commitment on women's reservation and to ensure equal political opportunities for women in all levels of governance. Party leaders said they will continue awareness campaigns and public outreach on the issue across the district in the coming days. Several senior leaders, women activists, and local supporters joined the gathering, making it a large-scale demonstration in the city. Police and officials maintained order throughout the protest to ensure peace and smooth conduct of the event.

DC G. Prabhu ordered land titles and e-property documents for housing beneficiaries, with site allotment by May 15

DC orders e-property with land title distribution

CHIKKABALLAPURA

Deputy Commissioner G. Prabhu has directed officials to issue land title deeds along with e-property documents for beneficiaries under housing and shelter schemes in the district. He issued the instruction during a review meeting on site allotment and census work held at the District Collectorate on Tuesday. He said about 308.47 acres of land is available under various housing schemes in rural and urban areas, and around 8,939 sites can be allotted to eligible beneficiaries. He instructed officials to ensure development of approved lands by May 15. The Deputy Commissioner stressed that selection of beneficiaries must be done strictly through Gram Sabhas as per government rules. He warned that no pressure or recommendations should be accepted during the selection



process. He said priority should be given to applicants already surveyed and those who applied in 2018, following the principle of first come first served. He added that irregular allotment of sites to ineligible persons will not be tolerated and may affect the entire administrative system. He also directed district level officers to closely monitor Gram Panchayat level work and ensure proper documentation, including photographs and video records of meetings. On census work, he said

it is a constitutional duty and no leave will be granted to assigned staff during the process. He warned of disciplinary action if work is not completed on time and noted that progress in some areas is slow. He also instructed officials to set up taluk level helpines for immediate response to drinking water problems and ensure tanker supply within 24 hours if required. Senior officials including the Zilla Panchayat CEO and Sub Divisional Officer attended the meeting.

Awareness drive calls for end untouchability mindset

HUNSUR

Tahsildar Manjunath said untouchability is a mental illness and must be removed through awareness and law together. He spoke at the inauguration of an awareness program held at Ambedkar Bhavan organized by the Social Welfare Department and Light Service Organization. He said untouchability and caste discrimination have affected Dalits for many years and still block social equality in some areas. Though laws exist, he noted that practice continues in some rural places and needs strong public resistance and awareness. Councillor Manasa said women must be educated and should stand with self respect to oppose social injustice.

Officer Harish shared an example where an Anganwadi initially faced boycott from upper caste families but later acceptance grew. He said persistence helped bring change and urged patience while promoting equality in society.

CHITRADURGA PLANS MEANINGFUL BUDDHA JAYANTI CELEBRATION

CHITRADURGA

Sub-Divisional Officer K. J. Kantaraj said Buddha Jayanti, marking the birth anniversary of Lord Buddha, will be celebrated in a meaningful way by the district administration. He was speaking at a preparatory meeting held at the District Collector's office hall.

He said the teachings of Gautama Buddha, who spread the message of peace and non-violence, remain relevant in all times and should inspire harmony in society.

As part of the programme on May 1, a cultural procession carrying tableaux depicting Buddha's teachings will be taken out on main streets at 9 a.m. A stage programme will follow at 11 a.m. near the Buddha statue in front of the Onake Obavva District Stadium.

Officials said a special lecture on Buddha's life and

principles will be arranged to create awareness among youth. Due to the summer season, arrangements for drinking water, seating and basic facilities will be ensured for the public attending the event.

Authorities also decided to install banners at key locations, including bus stands, to spread awareness about the celebration.

Assistant Director of Kannada and Culture Department B.M. Gurunath urged public

participation to make the district-level programme successful.

Officials also discussed repairing and repainting the Buddha statue in front of the stadium, where minor cracks were observed.

Leaders and officials requested participation from students and organisations in the cultural procession to make the event successful and promote the message of peace, unity and compassion in society.



Shankaracharya message of humanity inspires Mandya event

MANDYA

Additional Superintendent of Police Gangadhar Swami said Shankaracharya spread a message of humanity and worked for the welfare of the world. He was speaking at the Sri Shankaracharya Jayanti programme held at Kalamandir in Mandya, organised by District Administration, Kannada and Culture Department. He said Shankaracharya promoted Advaita philosophy and strengthened values of Hinduism that guide society even today. He urged people to fol-

low his ideals to maintain peace and harmony in society.

Assistant Director B V Nandish and leaders Shankaranarayana Shastri, B G Uma, and Gopalakrishna Shenoy attended the programme. The programme highlighted Shankaracharya's contribution to spiritual thought and his role in spreading unity among people. Speakers said his teachings continue to inspire society to live with respect, discipline and understanding. The event saw participation from officials, cultural representatives and community leaders who paid tribute to his legacy.

FREE COACHING INITIATIVE

CET NEET coaching continues for students

RAMANAGARA

Municipal Corporation President K. Seshadri Shashi said CET NEET and JEE coaching for government college students will continue in 2026-27 academic year to support poor and middle class families in Ramanagara. Speaking at the closing ceremony held at a pre university college with Akka IAS Academy he said the program aims to give equal opportunity for competitive exam preparation without financial burden on parents. He said private coaching



costs more than one lakh rupees but the municipality has made it free so students can prepare better for CET NEET and JEE exams. Dr. Shivakumar director of

Akka Academy said this is first such initiative by a municipal body in the state and they will continue guidance for students in future competitive exams. He advised stu-

dents to stay healthy eat simple food sleep well and remain calm before exams to improve performance. Municipal Commissioner Dr. Jayanna asked students to work hard and bring pride to their parents and college through success.

College Principal Ansar Ul Haq said free coaching has created history in Ramanagara and increased confidence among government college students. He said earlier students had to travel to Bengaluru for costly coaching but now local support is helping

many families. Project Director G.D. Shekhar praised the program and said students must use this opportunity well to achieve good ranks in entrance exams. He added that success depends on discipline dedication and continuous practice by students in coming days.

College lecturers and trainers also attended the program and expressed happiness over the initiative which supports rural and poor students in higher education. Program strengthens students future opportunities.

QUICK READ

**Planned power cut to hit Gokarna areas****KARWAR**

A planned power shutdown will affect Gokarna and nearby rural areas on April 22 due to urgent maintenance work. Officials said the 33KV Gokarna line under Kumbhanta sub-division will be repaired, causing power cut from 10 am to 5 pm in Gokarna branch areas. In rural sections, work on 11KV Bada and 11KV Masurana lines and a new 11KV line near Nagura and Khandagara in Mirjana will also lead to disruption. Authorities requested public cooperation and asked consumers to plan ahead. HESCOM officials said the work is necessary for better and safer electricity supply for consumers in the region said

**Chitradurga professor earns PhD degree honour****CHITRADURGA**

Assistant Professor C.N. Venkatesh of SJM Arts, Science and Commerce College in Chitradurga has been awarded a PhD degree by Vijayanagara Sri Krishnadevaraya University. His research was carried out in the Department of Pure Sciences under the guidance of Dr. Shashikant H. Majagi from the Zoology Department. Venkatesh completed his thesis titled "Ecological Studies of Mallapur Lake Chitradurga District with Special Reference to Heavy Metal Toxicity." The study focused on environmental conditions and pollution impact in the lake. College staff and colleagues congratulated him for his academic achievement and contribution to ecological research.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, CHANDRAREDDY S/o CHANGAREDDY R/o Manighatta, Shanubhoganahalli, Kolar, Karnataka-563101, have changed the name of my minor son YASHU C aged 14 years and he shall hereafter be known as YASHAS C.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, SHANKAR ASHOK SHINDE S/o ASHOK SHINDE, R/o No-154/5, Muskaan Residency, 1st A Main, 8th Block, Kormangala, VI Block, Bengaluru, Karnataka-560095, have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as SHANKAR THACKUR.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, JAYESH TARANATH SHETTY S/o TARANATH G SHETTY, R/o 3-W-26-2191/30, Jay Karan, Manjushree Layout, Kadri Temple New Road, Kadri, Kankanady, Mangalore, Dakshina Kannada, Karnataka-575002, have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as JAYESH TARANATH SHETTY SHETTY.

NAME CHANGE

I, JAGADESAN E. S/o. Ellesan Ningappagundu, Resident of No.54, Madeshwara Layout, Madeshwara Temple, Shanubhoganahalli, Bannerghatta, Bengaluru Rural-560083, have changed my name to JAGADESHAN ELLESAN. Vide Affidavit Dated: 21.04.2026 before notary G. DAYANANDA, Bengaluru.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, ASHA T BHAT W/o LATE THIMMANNA G BHAT R/o No 1678, 7th Main, E Block, Rajajinagar 2nd Stage, Rajajinagar 2nd Block, Bengaluru, Bangalore, Karnataka-560010, have changed the name of my minor daughter A T PANNAGASHREE aged 17 years and she shall hereafter be known as PANNAGA BHAT.

NAME CHANGE

I, MOHAMMED TABREZ MOHAMMED NISAR, S/o. Mohammed Nisar, Resident of No.5, Veerabhadra Mudaliar Street, Near Health & Glow, Frazer Town, Bengaluru -560005, have changed my name to MOHAMMED TABREZ. Vide Affidavit Dated: 16.04.2026 before notary R Basavaraja, Bengaluru.

NAME CHANGE

I, ABDUL KHALIQ, resident of No 28, 16th Main, 10th A Cross, BTM Layout, 2nd Stage, Bannerghatta Road Post, Bengaluru-560076, have changed my Minor daughter's name from ALIZA FATIMAH to MAHI GULZAR, vide affidavit dated: 16.04.2026, before Notary R.BASAVARAJA, Bengaluru.

NAME CHANGE

I, SIDDALINGAPPA, Residing at Ganga nilaya 6th sisira cross Manjunath nagar kyathasandra Post Tumkur 572104 karnataka. have changed my name to SIDDALINGAPPA R., vide affidavit dated: 17.04.2026 before notary RAMESH NAIK C.Tumkur.

IN THE COURT OF THE II ADDITIONAL CIVIL JUDGE, AT DODDABALLAPUR C.Mis.No.1067/2025
Between: SMT. SUMITHRA BAI D/o Late Govinda Naika W/o Manjunatha Naika Aged about 40 years, R/o at: Melinayanakandahalli Village, Tubagere Hobli, Doddaballapura Taluk, Bangalore Rural District. And others
And: The Tahsildar, Doddaballapura Taluk.

PETITIONERS
RESPONDENT
PUBLIC NOTICE
Whereas the petitioners have filed the above petition under Section 13(3) and 14 of Registration of Births and Deaths act 1969, for seeking the death certificate of the mother of petitioners by name SMT.SAKI BAI W/O LATE GOVINDANAIKA Dated on 21.01.1984 Melina nayakandahalli Village, Tubagere Hobli, Doddaballapura Taluk.
In this regard it is hereby notice that whoever has interested in the said matter may appear in person or through an Advocate duly authorized before the above said court on 06.05.2025 at 11 A.M. forenoon. In default this matter will be heard and disposed off an ex-parte.
Given under my hand and seal of the court on this 21st day of April 2025.
By order of the court
SHERISTEDAR, Additional Civil Judge
Doddaballapur.
Sri. Mahesh S. Advocate, Court Road, Doddaballapur-561203.

Mandali slams BJP over women reservation row

Mandali said Cong supports women's reservation, citing past policies, while accusing BJP of delaying implementation

GADAG

Ashok Mandali said BJP has double standards on women's reservation and Congress has long record of supporting social equality. He said Congress first gave 33 percent reservation for women in local bodies during Rajiv Gandhi government. He said there are nearly 15 lakh elected women representatives across India due to that policy.

He claimed BJP is wrongly

accusing Congress on women's bill even though Congress MPs supported the 2023 Nari Shakti Vandan Act. He said the bill has delay conditions like census and delimitation which postpone real implementation. Mandali alleged BJP promised women's reservation before elections but failed to implement it even after coming to power in 2014 and 2019. He said Congress governments have always taken historic steps like

constitutional equality, laws against dowry and domestic violence, and women's empowerment programs. He also highlighted Karnataka schemes like Shakti Yojana free bus travel and Gruhalakshmi scheme giving monthly support to women. He said these programs have strengthened women financially and increased their participation in social and economic activities. He added that BJP is trying to delay real reservation

benefits while using it as an election promise. He urged voters to recognize Congress contribution to women's empowerment and support inclusive development policies. He said reservation delay is denying political space to women in upcoming elections. Mandali claimed BJP is focusing on publicity rather than real empowerment of women. He said Congress approach ensures participation of women from all communities includ-



ing backward classes. He said the goal is equal opportunity and stronger representation of

women in governance. He also pointed to past Congress reforms that created legal rights and protections for women in India. He said these reforms include property rights, workplace safety laws and anti violence measures. He said the government continues to focus on welfare and financial independence for rural women. He called for unity and support for policies that strengthen women's role in society.

Pensioners submit 13-key demands to centre

HOSAPETE

Members of the All India Federation of State Government Pensioners and the Karnataka State Government Pensioners Union submitted a petition to the Prime Minister through the Hosapete Tahsildar, raising 13 major demands for pensioners' welfare. The pensioners urged the government to repeal the Finance Bill (Validation Act) 2025 and scrap the New Pension Scheme while restoring the old pension system. They also demanded that Dearness Allowance be increased on par with central pensioners across all states. Another key demand was to extend Eighth

Pay Commission benefits to employees retiring by December 31, 2025.

The group called for reducing the pension commutation recovery period to 11 years and clearing 18 months of Dearness Allowance arrears from the Covid-19 period with interest. They further demanded implementation of court rulings for all employees, restoration of travel concessions in trains, flights, Volvo and AC buses, and introduction of comprehensive health insurance for pensioners. The petition also suggested increasing pension gradually with age, starting from 10% after 65 years up to full pension at 95 years. Other demands included



stopping privatization of public sector enterprises and repealing new labour laws. Pensioner leaders said these measures are essential to improve the living standards and financial security of retired employees across the country. Union representatives including Maradi Jambaiiah Nayaka, Bisati Tayappa Nayaka and Nagaraj Pattar were present during the

Pensioners in Hosapete submitted 13 demands to PM, including old pension restoration, DA hike, pay commission benefits, arrears clearance, and improved welfare measures

submission and urged the central government

District marks Basavanna Shankaracharya Jayanti with reverence

BENGALURU RURAL

On the occasion of Basava Jayanti and Shankaracharya Jayanti, District Collector Dr. K. N. Anuradha paid floral tributes to the portraits of Basavanna and Adi Shankaracharya near the bronze statue of Basavanna within the District Administration Building premises.

The event marked the 893rd birth anniversary of Kanyakayogi Basavanna and the 1238th Jayanti of Shankaracharya, observed with respect and community participation.

The programme was jointly organised by the District Administration, Zilla Panchayat, and the Kannada and Culture Department, aiming to spread the teachings of both great philosophers among the public. Additional District Collector Syeda Aisha, G.P Deputy Secretary Shivakumar, and religious leaders including Sri Mahanta Shivacharya Swamiji of Bellavi Math and Basavaraja Swamiji of Khani Math



attended the ceremony. Community leaders Jagadish, Manjunath, Virupaksha, Annappa, Shanta Murthy, Ramesh, and Nagesh were also present, along with district officials and staff members.

Speakers highlighted Basavanna's message of equality and honest work, and Shankaracharya's philosophy of spiritual unity and knowledge. The celebrations were conducted in a simple yet meaningful manner, encouraging

citizens to follow values that promote harmony in society. Many attendees said such events help younger generations understand the lives and ideas of these revered figures. The administration stated that similar programmes will continue to be held to keep cultural and moral traditions alive in the district.

Farmers arrested after black flag protest row

CHAMARAJANAGAR

Police in Gundlupet arrested farmers who were heading to protest against Chief Minister Siddaramaiah with black flags. The group belonged to the Karnataka State Farmers Association and was led by Dr Guruprasad. They were protesting over alleged irregularities in a plan to fill 110 lakes with river water. Farmers said the project ignored a four stage water distribution system from the river source. They also said their complaints were not heard, so they planned a black flag protest. Police stopped the march early and took the protesters into custody to prevent unrest.

Dr Guruprasad said the farmers had planned to submit a demand letter but felt it would be ignored or discarded by authorities. He added that turning lakes into a so called project without proper steps would harm farmers and waste resources in the district.

DC K. Lakshmi Priya urged HPV vaccination for 14-15-year-old girls, ensuring free coverage and coordinated cervical cancer prevention

HPV vaccine drive launched to protect girls: Lakshmi

KARWAR

Deputy Commissioner K. Lakshmi Priya said HPV vaccination should be given to girls aged 14 to 15 to prevent cervical cancer in the district. She chaired a meeting at the District Collector Office hall reviewing progress of the vaccination programme on Tuesday.

She said cervical cancer is one of the most common cancers among women in India and can be prevented through HPV vaccination. The Health and Family Welfare Department has made the vaccine available free for all eligible girls in the district. She asked the Education Department to inform parents and students about vaccination and spread awareness in schools and villages. Public awareness will also be created through vehicles and local bodies in rural and urban areas of the district. Officials said the vaccine is

safe and has no major side effects according to health studies and reports. Parents have been urged to ensure their children receive the vaccine to prevent future health risks. The vaccination programme has already started in the district and sufficient stock of doses is available. The Deputy Commissioner directed all departments including Revenue, Education, Urban Local Bodies and Gram Panchayats to coordinate the campaign. She instructed officials to aim for complete coverage so that no eligible girl is left out of vaccination. Officials from the Health Department, District administration and local bodies participated in the meeting through video conference and assured full cooperation to achieve successful implementation of the programme across all taluks in Karwar district in coming months. We aim to protect every eligible girl.

Shankaracharya legacy inspires unity and discipline

**CHITRADURGA**

Sri Shankaracharya who travelled across India in a short span of 32 years and established Advaita philosophy remains an ideal for today's generation said Sub-Divisional Officer Dr. K.J. Kantaraj at a Jayanti programme in Chitradurga. He said Shankaracharya revived Sanatan Dharma and created cultural unity by setting up monasteries in four directions of the country including Sringeri Puri Badrinath and Dwarka. He noted that people today often feel confused about life direction even after many years while Shankaracharya achieved spiritual and social reform at a young age. The programme was organised by the District Administration Zilla Panchayat Kannada and Culture De-

partment and Municipal Council at the District Collector Office Hall. Speakers highlighted that Shankaracharya was not only a philosopher but also a poet and musician. His works like Bhajagovindam continue to guide society with simple spiritual meaning. He spread the idea of Advaita that the soul and the Supreme are one and taught people to rise above superstition and division. Chitradurga Brahmin Sangha president P.S. Manjunath said Shankaracharya message is still relevant and promotes unity among Indians. He stressed that public work should be done with devotion and discipline. K.R. Ramadevi said Shankaracharya united India through his travels and established Amnaya Peethas which strengthened cultural bonds.

RUDSET launches desktop publishing skill training drive

BRAHMAVAR

The Rural Development and Self Employment Training Institute RUDSET Institute in Brahmaravar has launched a 15-day Desktop Publishing training programme aimed at promoting self-employment among youth. The programme was inaugurated by Dr. Nagesh E., Senior Manager at Canara Bank's Regional Office in East Bengaluru. He praised RUDSET Institute for its continuous efforts in empowering unemployed youth across the country through skill-based training

and self-employment opportunities. Dr. Nagesh told trainees that skill and enthusiasm within every individual can lead to success.

He encouraged participants to think creatively, adopt new ideas and develop innovative approaches to achieve their goals in life. Giriappa M., Senior Manager of Canara Bank and former RSETI Bengaluru director, shared motivational success stories of earlier trainees and urged participants to identify their strengths and convert them into income-generating ventures.

DISTRICT CULTURAL CELEBRATION

Gadag to celebrate Dr Rajkumar birthday event

GADAG

The district administration of Gadag district has announced a grand celebration for the birth anniversary of legendary actor Dr. Rajkumar on April 24 at 11 a.m. at the district administration auditorium hall. The event is being organised jointly by the District Administration, Zilla Panchayat and Information and Public Relations Department.

Legislative Council Speaker Basavaraj Horatti will attend as the chief guest. The programme will be presided



over by Law and Parliamentary Affairs Minister and district in-charge minister H. K. Patil.

Several prominent leaders

including Basavaraj Bommai, Salim Ahmed, G. S. Patil, P. C. Gaddigowdar, D. R. Patil, C. C. Patil, Dr. Chandru Lamani, S. V. Sankar, Pradeep Shettar and others will participate as chief guests.

Officials said senior government representatives including Planning Department secretary Ramandeep Chaudhary and Regional Commissioner Janaki K. M. will also attend the programme.

The event will include a special lecture by Basavaraj Managundi, honorary president of the Dr. Rajkumar Fans

Association Federation. Cultural performances will feature singing of popular songs from Dr. Rajkumar's films by artists Gowdappa Bomappa and Kala Tondwari A.

District officials including Deputy Commissioner C. N. Sridhar and Superintendent of Police Rohan Jagadish have extended invitations to the public.

The celebration aims to honour the life and contribution of Dr. Rajkumar, whose films and songs continue to inspire generations across Karnataka.



Shankaracharya’s wisdom serves as guiding light for humanity: PM

‘Guru’s teachings promote harmony, discipline, and a sense of unity among all beings’

NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday paid homage to Adi Shankaracharya on his Jayanti, highlighting the enduring relevance of his teachings on Advaita Vedanta and their profound influence on spiritual thought and human values.

Taking to the social media platform X, Narendra Modi remembered Adi Shankaracharya as one of India’s greatest spiritual luminaries whose philosophy continues to guide millions across the world. He emphasized that the doctrine of Advaita Vedanta, which teaches the oneness of existence, remains deeply relevant in today’s world. The Prime Minister noted that Shankaracharya’s teachings promote harmony, discipline, and a sense of unity among all beings.



Modi also highlighted the philosopher’s efforts in revitalising spiritual thought across India, stating that his work continues to inspire people to follow the path of truth, compassion, and collective well-being. He added that Adi Shankaracharya’s wisdom serves as a guiding light for humanity even in modern times.

Adi Shankaracharya, wide-

ly regarded as a towering figure in Indian philosophy, played a pivotal role in consolidating the principles of Advaita Vedanta within Hindu thought. Born in Kalady, he renounced worldly life at a young age and became a sanyasi. He is believed to have attained spiritual enlightenment early in his life. He authored influential

commentaries on key Hindu scriptures such as the Upanishads, the Bhagavad Gita, and the Brahma Sutras, which continue to be studied and revered by scholars and practitioners alike. His work laid the foundation for a unified philosophical framework that emphasizes the unity of the individual soul with universal consciousness.

Adi Shankaracharya also established four major monastic centres across India to promote spiritual learning and preserve tradition. These include centres in Sringeri in the south, Dwarka in the west, Puri in the east, and Jyotirmath in the north.

Earlier in the day, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath also paid tribute to the revered spiritual leader, acknowledging his immense contributions to Indian philosophy and culture.

Rahul’s ‘Nitish compromised’ remark kicks up political storm

NEW DELHI

The sharp reactions from NDA leaders came after Rahul Gandhi’s remarks during a rally in Thoothukudi, where he alleged that Nitish Kumar had been “compromised” and claimed that the Bharatiya Janata Party had exerted control over him. Gandhi also suggested that Nitish Kumar’s political standing weakened following his resignation as Chief Minister and subsequent move to the Rajya Sabha.

Responding to the criticism, Bihar Deputy Chief Minister Vijay Kumar Chaudhary questioned the intent and coherence of Gandhi’s remarks. He said that Rahul Gandhi’s statements often lack clarity and are difficult for the public to interpret. Chaudhary further alleged that Gandhi does not demonstrate seriousness in politics and fails to adhere to the standards of parliamentary decorum.

In a separate response, Bihar Minister Ram Kripal Yadav dismissed Gandhi’s allegation



Bihar Deputy Chief Minister Vijay Kumar Chaudhary questioned the intent and coherence of Gandhi’s remarks

that Nitish Kumar resigned under pressure from the BJP. He stated that such claims reflect the mindset of the Congress Party, which he accused of having a history of exerting pressure for political gains. Yadav asserted that Nitish Kumar made his decisions independently and without any ex-

ternal influence. The exchange marks a fresh escalation in political tensions between the ruling NDA and the opposition Congress party. Bihar’s political landscape has remained highly dynamic in recent years, with shifting alliances and leadership changes often becoming subjects of national debate.

Political observers note that such confrontations are likely to intensify as parties gear up for upcoming electoral battles, with leaders from both sides sharpening their rhetoric to consolidate support among voters.

QUICK READ

‘RBI in wait and watch mode amid West Asia crisis’

New Delhi

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) is closely monitoring the fallout from the West Asia conflict and will not make firm commitments on the future path of interest rates, Governor Sanjay Malhotra has said, adding that prolonged supply disruptions risk embedding inflation into India’s broader price level. In his speech at Princeton University in the US, Malhotra said the on-going conflict poses a direct threat to the Indian economy given the region’s outsized role in the country’s trade. Moreover, West Asia accounts for roughly one-sixth of India’s exports, one-fifth of its imports, half of its crude oil imports, two-fifths of its fertiliser imports, and nearly two-fifths of inward remittances.

PM Modi greets civil servants on Civil Services Day

New Delhi

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday extended greetings to all civil servants on Civil Services Day and wished that they would continue to serve the nation with excellence, compassion and innovation, upholding the highest standards of duty. PM Modi took to social media ‘X’ and said, Greetings to all civil servants on Civil Services Day. This is an occasion to further strengthen the resolve to work towards good governance and nation building. From the grassroots to policy-making, the efforts of civil servants touch countless lives and contribute to India’s progress. May our civil servants continue to serve with excellence, compassion and innovation, upholding the highest standards of duty, he said.

He claims TVK stands firmly for unity, inclusiveness, and the welfare of all sections of society

Vijay urges voters to back TVK, targets DMK

CHENNAI

In a detailed statement addressed to the people of the state, Vijay expressed deep gratitude for the overwhelming love and encouragement he has received since stepping into politics.

He acknowledged that his journey has not been easy, describing it as one filled with unimaginable challenges, restrictions and pain. Despite these hurdles, he said the consistent support from the public has kept him motivated and committed to his political mission.

Sharpening his attack on political rivals, Vijay criticised the ruling Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK), calling it a people-opposing force. He also accused the

Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) of promoting divisive politics and ideologies that, according to him, threaten social harmony. Positioning his party as a people-centric alternative, Vijay said TVK stands firmly for unity, inclusiveness, and the welfare of all sections of society.

Vijay further asserted that he would not succumb to pressure from what he described as fascist forces or corporate entities attempting to influence political outcomes. He emphasised that intimidation or coercion would not weaken the bond he shares with the people of Tamil Nadu. No force in the world can separate us, he said, expressing confidence in the collective strength of the people.



Highlighting the rise of TVK, Vijay credited divine grace, as well as the support of women and youth, for transforming the party into a growing political force in the state. He noted that his entry into politics was not backed

Support DMK to protect TN’s rights, culture, growth: Stalin

CHENNAI

Chief Minister M.K. Stalin, on Tuesday made a final appeal to voters as the high-voltage campaigning for the Tamil Nadu Assembly elections comes to an end this evening, urging people to back the DMK-led alliance to secure the state’s future. With polling scheduled for April 23, the Election Commission has also enforced a ban on the publication of opinion polls during the silence period. A total of 4,023 candidates are contesting across 234 constituencies, setting the stage for a tightly fought four-cornered contest involving the DMK, AIADMK, Naam Tamilar Katchi, and other parties.

Despite intense summer heat across the state, political activity has remained brisk, with leaders and candidates engaging in rallies, roadshows, and door-to-door campaigns to reach voters.



Stalin has led the DMK’s campaign with an extensive statewide tour, canvassing support for party nominees and alliance partners. As campaigning is drawing to a close, he released a video message on social media platform X, underlining his government’s achievements and cautioning against forces that he said aim to derail Tamil Nadu’s progress.

In the video, Stalin struck an emotional note, saying his bond with Tamil Nadu and its people is rooted in deep responsibility. When people call me more dangerous than my father, I see it as a reminder that I am a threat to those who wish to betray Tamil Nadu or obstruct its development, he said.



7 districts under ECI’s special security scanner

KOLKATA

As Kolkata prepares for the first phase of the West Bengal Assembly elections on April 23, covering 152 constituencies across 16 districts, the Election Commission of India (ECI) has flagged seven districts as highly sensitive due to security concerns. These include Malda, Murshidabad, North Dinajpur, and Cooch Behar in North Bengal, along with Birbhum, West Midnapore, and West Burdwan in South Bengal.

These districts were identified based on past records of electoral violence and booth sensitivity over the last 15

years. As a result, they will see the highest deployment of central forces and Quick Response Teams (QRTs) on polling day. Most polling booths in these regions have been classified as critical or hypersensitive. To ensure peaceful voting, the ECI has deployed 2,193 QRTs across all constituencies in this phase. Murshidabad alone will have 219 QRTs, the highest among all districts. Each team will primarily consist of Central Armed Police Forces personnel.

Additionally, a two-step voter verification system will be enforced at every polling booth to prevent malpractice and ensure secure elections.

India Semiconductor Mission ‘ISM 2.0’ likely by May

NEW DELHI

The government is preparing to roll out an expanded version of the India Semiconductor Mission ‘ISM 2.0’ likely by May, with a proposed outlay ranging between Rs 1 lakh crore and Rs 1.2 lakh crore. According to the NDTV Profit report, inter-ministerial consultations are currently underway, while the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) is awaiting final approval from the Finance Ministry. The proposed allocation is significantly higher than the Rs 76,000 crore earmarked for the first phase of the semiconductor mission, said the report, citing sources. Under ISM 2.0, the government aims to widen the scope of the programme beyond chip fabrication and design to include support for semiconductor equipment, raw materials and other critical inputs.

Maha thwarts 13 child marriages on Akshaya Tritiya

MUMBAI

The Maharashtra Department of Women and Child Development on Tuesday said that a series of preventive measures implemented on the occasion of Akshaya Tritiya led to the successful prevention of 13 child marriages across the state.

The department said that special arrangements for on-line coordination and guidance were put in place under the chairmanship of Meghna Bordikar, Minister of State for Women and Child Development in Maharashtra, to ensure swift action and monitoring.

Given that Akshaya Tritiya is considered one of the most auspicious days in the Hindu calendar and often witnesses a rise in weddings and mass marriage ceremonies, the department had stepped up vigilance in advance, anticipating a possible increase in instances of child marriage.

To address the concern, an online review meeting was convened under Bordikar’s leadership, attended by senior officials, including the Secretary of the department, the Commissioner, District Collectors, and Superintendents of Police. During the meeting, all agencies were directed to remain alert and to take strict measures to prevent any such incidents.



Officials said that a comprehensive awareness campaign was carried out at the district, taluka and village levels across Maharashtra. Through District Child Protection Units, Child Helpline 1098, Anganwadi workers, Village Child Protection Committees and various organisations working in the field of child welfare, citizens were informed about the harmful consequences of child marriage.

The campaign included a range of outreach activities such as kirtans, Bhagwat recitations, street plays, awareness rallies, posters and stickers. Authorities also encouraged households to take pledges against child marriage to ensure wider community participation.

As part of deterrent measures, the administration warned that criminal cases could be registered within 24 hours against marriage hall owners, priests, musical troupes and relatives involved in facilitating child marriages.

SPIRITUAL JOURNEY

Char Dham Yatra 2026 off to a devotional start

RUDRAPYRAG

A wave of devotion and enthusiasm has swept across the region, with pilgrims arriving in large numbers from across India and abroad to undertake the revered journey.

The yatra, considered one of the most important spiritual pilgrimages in Hinduism, began earlier with the opening of Gangotri Temple and Yamunotri Temple on the auspicious occasion of Akshaya Tritiya, following a six-month winter closure.

Amid chants of Vedic hymns and traditional rituals,

temple doors were opened, ushering in a new pilgrimage season expected to attract lakhs of devotees.

Traditionally, the pilgrimage follows a west-to-east sequence, beginning at Yamunotri, followed by Gangotri, then Kedarnath, and concluding at Badrinath. Authorities have undertaken extensive preparations to ensure a smooth and safe experience for pilgrims.

Measures for security, traffic regulation, and healthcare have been strengthened, while facilities such as sanitation, parking, and accommodation

have been upgraded along the routes.

Both online and offline registration systems are currently in place to manage the large influx of visitors. Security personnel, along with State Disaster Response Force teams, have been deployed at key points with a strong focus on disaster preparedness. Helplines and control rooms have also been activated to assist pilgrims and respond to emergencies.

The opening date of Kedarnath is traditionally decided by the Char Dham Temple Committee at the Omkaresh-



war Temple on the occasion of Maha Shivratri, which was observed on February 15 this year.

The ceremonial opening of Kedarnath is marked by grand

rituals. A day before the temple opens, the sacred palanquin carrying the deity is taken in a procession from Gaurikund to the temple, covering a challenging 16-kilometre trek. Priests perform elaborate Vedic rituals before unveiling the idol of Bhagwan Kedarnath for darshan.

With spiritual fervour at its peak and robust arrangements in place, the Char Dham Yatra 2026 has begun on a vibrant and devotional note, drawing thousands of devotees seeking blessings and spiritual solace.



QUICK READ

UN council slams
deadly Lebanon
peacekeeper attack

United Nations

The UN Security Council strongly condemned an attack in southern Lebanon that killed a French peacekeeper and injured three others, including two seriously. Members demanded a quick investigation and accountability for those responsible. They said peacekeepers must never be targeted and offered condolences to victims' families and support to France. The Council backed UNIFIL and urged all sides to respect its safety and movement. UN chief Antonio Guterres also condemned the attack, warning such acts may be war crimes and must be punished. This incident highlights rising tensions despite a recent ceasefire agreement in the region.

South Korea slams
Japan shrine visit
controversy

Seoul

South Korea expressed deep regret after Sanae Takaichi sent a ritual offering to Yasukuni Shrine, a site linked to Japan's wartime past. Lawmakers also visited or planned visits, sparking criticism. Seoul urged Japan to face history with honesty and show true remorse. The shrine honours war dead, including convicted World War II leaders like Hideki Tojo. The move has upset neighbours, including China. Tensions remain sensitive due to Japan's past occupation of Korea and wartime actions across Asia.

Bangladesh family
threatened after
harassment case filed

Dhaka

A rights group condemned attacks and threats against a teenage survivor's family in Bangladesh after they filed a case against madrasa head Abul Khayer for attempted rape. Manusher Jonno Foundation said the family faced violence, vandalism, and pressure to withdraw the complaint. Reports claimed a large group attacked their home, sparking outrage after a video spread online. The group urged authorities to protect the family, arrest those involved, and ensure justice. It warned that fear and intimidation stop survivors from seeking legal help and weaken trust in the justice system.

INS Sudarshini boosts
India Morocco
maritime ties

Casablanca

INS Sudarshini completed a successful visit to Casablanca, strengthening maritime ties between India and Morocco. The visit, part of Lokayan 26, included training exchanges, meetings with Moroccan naval leaders, and friendly activities with cadets. Events onboard and official interactions helped deepen professional and cultural relations. The mission highlights cooperation, shared interests, and mutual learning between the two nations. After the visit, the ship sailed for Las Palmas, continuing its journey to spread goodwill and promote global unity through maritime engagement and partnerships.

Leaked secrets spark
major S. Korea-US rift

A major diplomatic row erupted in Seoul over claims that a top official leaked classified American intelligence regarding N. Korea.

SEOUL

A major diplomatic row has erupted in Seoul following claims that a top South Korean official leaked classified American intelligence.

General Xavier Brunson, commander of U.S. forces in South Korea, reportedly filed a formal protest after sensitive details about North Korea's nuclear program were made public.

The controversy centers on Unification Minister Chung Dong-young. During a recent government meeting, Chung named "Kusong" as a secret location for North Korea's uranium enrichment. Previously, only two other sites were officially known to the public. While Chung claims



he was using "open information," critics argue he revealed secrets shared privately by Washington.

The fallout has been immediate. Sources say the U.S. has already started pulling back, placing new limits on the satellite intelligence it shares with South Korea. This "intelligence freeze" specifically targets technology used to track North Korean nuclear movements.

Local lawmakers are now calling for Chung to resign, arguing his "loose lips" have damaged the vital alliance between the two nations. "A minister who causes such a rift should not stay in office," stated Rep. Sung Il-jong, head of the national defense committee.

However, the story has two sides. South Korea's Defense Ministry denied that any formal protest took place, calling the reports "not true" and inappropriate. They insist that the military partnership remains strong and that both countries are still following their intelligence-sharing rules. For now, the U.S. military is staying quiet, refusing to confirm or deny the brewing tension.

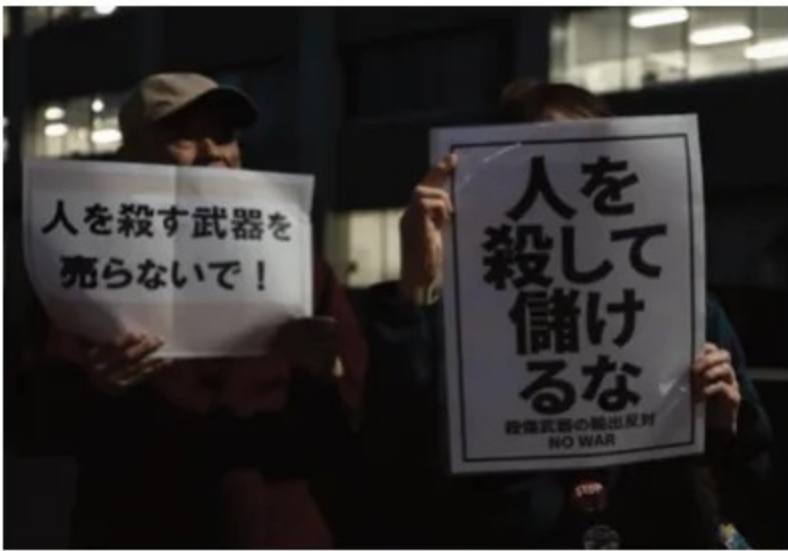
Japan changes rules to
sell powerful weapons

TOKYO

Japan has officially changed its laws to allow the sale of lethal weapons to other countries.

This major update marks a massive shift in how the nation handles its military equipment. For decades, Japan followed strict rules that only allowed the export of non-combat gear, like rescue tools and transport vehicles.

Under the new guidelines, the government is scrapping those old limits. Instead of just five specific categories, equipment is now divided into "weapons" and "non-weapons." This means Japan can now export high-powered gear, including



missiles and destroyers, to countries that have signed security agreements. While the government says it won't sell to nations currently at war, "special circumstances" could allow exceptions if Japan's own security is at stake.

The decision has sparked anger across the country. Many citizens are worried that this moves Japan away from the "peace-loving"

identity it adopted after World War II. Protesters gathered in Tokyo this week, holding signs calling the move a "rejection of peace" and chanting slogans to avoid repeating past mistakes.

One of the biggest complaints from opposition leaders is that these sales no longer require approval from Parliament. Instead, a small security council will make the final calls in private. This change happened on the same day as a controversial festival at a local war shrine, adding more tension to the debate. Critics fear that without more oversight, Japan risks becoming a "merchant of death" and fueling conflicts around the world.

Another Nepal min faces
new financial queries

KATHMANDU

Nepal's young government is facing a fresh wave of controversy as a second cabinet minister comes under fire for alleged misconduct. Just two weeks after the Labor Minister was sacked for nepotism, Home Minister Sudan Gurung is now facing serious questions regarding his personal finances and business ties.

The ruling Rastriya Swatantra Party (RSP) rose to power recently on a platform of transparency and clean politics. However, reports have emerged linking Gurung to investments shared with Deepak Bhatta, a businessman currently being investigated for money laundering. This connection has triggered calls for a deep-dive investigation from within Gurung's own party.

The Home Minister has denied any wrongdoing. He argues that his stock hold-



ings were openly declared and that any confusion is simply a matter of how the assets were categorized. "Someone who intends to hide assets does not openly declare over Rs 20 million in investments," Gurung stated, defending his integrity.

Despite his defense, the pressure is mounting. Critics point out that the previous minister, Deepak Kumar Sah, was dismissed instantly after appointing his wife to a government board. Some party members argue that the allegations against Gurung are even more serious and deserve the same swift action.

The RSP gained massive support from young protesters who were tired of corruption in Nepal. Now, the party faces a difficult test, it must prove to its voters that its promise of "zero tolerance" applies to everyone, regardless of their rank or position in the cabinet.

India-Germany strengthen
bold defense ties

BERLIN

Defense Minister Rajnath Singh arrived in Germany, marking a pivotal moment for international security. This visit is the first by an Indian defense leader in seven years, signaling a fresh chapter in the strategic partnership between the two democratic powerhouses.

The mission focuses on moving beyond simple buyer-seller relationships. Instead, Singh and German Defense Minister Boris Pistorius aim to sign a Defense Industrial Cooperation Road-



Rajnath Singh visited Germany to launch a new defense industrial roadmap, prioritizing hi-tech co-production and military cooperation between the two nations.

map. This plan encourages

German companies to develop and build high-tech military hardware directly in India under the "Make-in-India" initiative.

Key areas of discussion include:

- Next-Gen Tech: Joint work on artificial intelligence, drones, and cybersecurity.
- Global Peace: New agreements for training United Nations peacekeepers.
- Military Ties: Increasing joint exercises and high-level engagement.

"The visit is significant for advancing industrial collaboration and emerging tech," the Indian Embassy shared. By focusing on co-production, India hopes to gain access to Germany's world-class engineering, while Germany secures a key ally in the Indo-Pacific region.

This meeting builds on momentum from last year when Pistorius visited New Delhi. Both nations emphasize a "rules-based international order," suggesting that this alliance is about more than just hardware, it is about regional stability. Singh is also scheduled to meet with top German industry CEOs to pitch India as a global manufacturing hub. The outcome of these talks could define the defense landscape for both nations for years to come.

India-UK deepen military co-op for future

LONDON: India and the United Kingdom have agreed to deepen military cooperation during a visit by Chief of Defence Staff General Anil Chauhan. This is the first official UK trip by an Indian CDS. Talks focused on closer military ties and new age warfare areas such as cyber security, space, and intelligence sharing. Both sides said future conflicts will rely more on technology, and forces must be ready for fast changing threats. They also discussed a defence industrial roadmap to co develop equipment. Leaders highlighted the importance of the Indo Pacific region and the need to keep it stable and secure. General Chauhan met ministers and experts, and held discussions on modernising India's armed forces. The three day visit included events and meetings with industry leaders. The two nations are expected to expand joint exercises and share more information, aiming to build stronger, reliable security for the future.

Beijing-Delhi skies
connect again
with direct flight

BEIJING

Travel between India and China is becoming easier as direct flights resume. Air China has relaunched its Beijing-Delhi service, operating three times weekly on Tuesdays, Fridays, and Sundays using an Airbus A330. Flights depart Beijing in the afternoon and arrive in Delhi by 8:20 PM, with one-way economy fares starting around \$523. This follows China Eastern Airlines restarting its Kunming-Kolkata route. Meanwhile, IndiGo has introduced daily Kolkata-Shanghai flights with fuel-efficient aircraft. These developments come after years of disruption due to the pandemic and border tensions. Alongside improved connectivity, India has eased investment rules to support startups, aiming to boost business ties and strengthen economic cooperation between the two nations.

Gold mining sparking
legal wars in Punjab

ISLAMABAD

A major row has broken out in Pakistan's Punjab province as local landowners face criminal charges for allegedly blocking gold extraction in the Attock region. While the government is eager to tap into the area's mineral wealth, critics say ordinary citizens are being punished instead of protected.

The controversy reached the Provincial Assembly this week, led by opposition leader Qazi Ahmed Akbar. He argued that instead of receiving royalties for the gold found on their property, landowners are being booked by police for "obstructing official work." Akbar demanded transparency, asking the government to reveal exactly how much revenue the gold has generated and why that money isn't reaching the locals.

In response, Punjab's Min-

ister for Mines and Minerals, Sher Ali Gorchani, defended the project. He insisted the province's assets belong to all its people and promised to share the "ground realities" soon. He also used the moment to attack the opposition, claiming the government is preventing the "looting and plunder" seen in other regions.

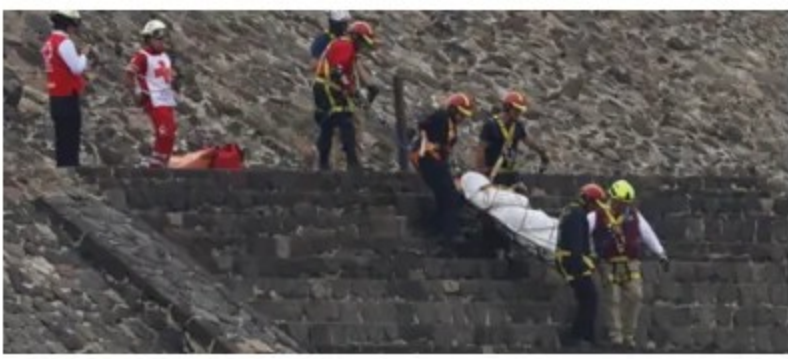
The debate turned personal and tense when opposition members sarcastically accused the government leadership of corruption. Despite the heated words, officials told the House that the mining department has already funneled billions into the provincial treasury. For the landowners in Attock, however, the "gold rush" has so far brought more legal trouble than wealth, leaving the community caught between high-value mining and their own land rights.

Shooting at Mexico's Teotihuacan
pyramids kills tourist

WASHINGTON DC

A tragic shooting at the historic Teotihuacan pyramids has left a Canadian tourist dead and at least 13 others injured. The incident occurred at the world-famous archaeological site near Mexico City. According to Mexico's security cabinet, an unidentified man opened fire near the Pyramid of the Moon before taking his own life.

The attack turned the ancient "City of the Gods" into a scene of chaos. While some victims were struck by gunfire, others were injured in the desperate rush to escape as shots echoed through the monu-



ments. Eight people remained hospitalized as of recently. Authorities recovered a handgun, a knife, and live ammunition from the scene. Canada's Foreign Ministry confirmed the death of one citizen and noted that another Canadian was among the wounded.

Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum expressed her deep grief over the violence at the UNESCO World Heritage site, which attracts millions of visitors annually. She has or-

dered a full federal investigation and confirmed that her administration is working closely with the Canadian Embassy to support the victims' families.

Videos on social media captured the terrifying moments as visitors fled the Pyramid of the Moon, a site usually known for its spiritual and historical significance. Federal and state authorities have increased security at the site, which sits about 50 km north-east of Mexico City. As the investigation continues, officials are working with multiple foreign embassies to assist other international tourists caught in the crossfire.

REFORMS NEED OF THE HOUR

India pushes for major UN shake-up

NEW YORK

India is pushing for a major shake-up at the United Nations, demanding more power for developing nations.

During a high-level meeting at the UN headquarters, Indian official Sibi George called for the Global South to have a permanent seat at the table. He argued that the current UN Security Council is outdated and needs to change to stay relevant.

India's message is clear,



the world has changed since the UN was formed, and global institutions must reflect that. George pointed out

that India's goals for reform align closely with the African model, which also seeks a stronger voice for its nations.

For years, India has been a vocal critic of the way the Security Council is run, stating that reform is the only way to solve global problems.

During his visit, George met with several top UN leaders to discuss peace missions. India is a massive supporter of UN peacekeeping, sending thousands of troops to help stabilize war-torn areas. Reaffirming this commitment, George highlighted that India remains a leader in

global teamwork.

To start his trip, George paid his respects at a statue of Mahatma Gandhi, a symbol of peace. This visit is part of a larger effort by India to ensure that countries from Asia, Africa, and Latin America are no longer ignored. By seeking permanent status, India hopes to lead a movement that makes the UN fairer for everyone, ensuring that the world's most populated regions have a say in global security.

Wolves are relegated after Crystal Palace and West Ham draw

Wolves relegated as West Ham secure vital draw against Crystal Palace

LONDON

Wolverhampton Wanderers were officially relegated from the Premier League after West Ham United held Crystal Palace to a goalless draw in a tense encounter at Selhurst Park, a result that confirmed Wolves cannot mathematically escape the drop with only five matches remaining in the season. The Midlands club, who had endured a consistently poor campaign, will now return to the Championship for the first time since 2018, ending their top-flight stay after a season marked by inconsistency, defensive lapses and missed opportunities in key fixtures.

West Ham's hard-earned point proved crucial in their own battle for survival, lifting them further clear of the relegation zone and strengthening their position heading into the final stretch of the campaign.

The match itself was largely uneventful, with West Ham



marginally stronger in the opening phase while Crystal Palace improved after half-time but failed to create clear chances in front of goal. Both goalkeepers were rarely tested in a match that lacked attacking quality, reflecting the high pressure and caution surrounding teams involved in the relegation fight.

West Ham captain Jarrod Bowen acknowledged the im-

portance of the point, stressing that his side must remain focused on their own performances rather than relying on other results to secure safety.

Crystal Palace extended their inconsistent run on Monday nights but remain comfortably mid-table, with their defensive record still among the better ones outside the top two teams in the league.

Goalkeeper Dean Hender-

son once again played a key role in securing a clean sheet, marking Palace's 12th shutout of the season, a tally only bettered by Arsenal and Manchester City.

Despite the disappointment of relegation confirmation elsewhere, West Ham players and staff viewed the result as a step forward in their survival push, with momentum now considered crucial in the remaining fixtures.

For Wolves, the confirmation brings an end to months of mounting pressure and underperformance, as they now begin planning for life in the Championship and a potential rebuild ahead of the next season. Club officials are expected to review squad structure, managerial direction and recruitment strategy as they prepare for the financial and sporting implications of relegation in the coming months, while supporters face a difficult transition after years of top-flight football.

Relegation-threatened Lecce halts losing streak with draw against Fiorentina

LECCE

Relegation-threatened Lecce ended their losing streak in Serie A with a crucial 1-1 draw against Fiorentina, earning a valuable point in their fight to stay in Italy's top flight.

Fiorentina appeared on course for victory after English winger Jack Harrison scored his first Serie A goal since joining the club, producing a superb curling finish from the edge of the box midway through the first half.

The on-loan Leeds United forward struck with precision into the far corner, breaking his long wait for a goal in his 18th appearance and giving Fiorentina control of the contest.

Lecce, however, showed resilience despite a difficult run of form that had seen them go 357 minutes without scoring before this fixture.

The hosts created several promising chances, with Walid Cheddira and Lassana Coulibaly both going close, only to be denied by last-ditch Fiorentina defending.

The turning point came in the 71st minute when Tiago



Gabriel rose highest to meet an Antonino Gallo corner, directing a glancing header past the goalkeeper to bring Lecce level. The equaliser sparked renewed energy in the home side as they pushed for a winner, though Fiorentina managed to hold firm in the closing stages to secure a share of the points.

Lecce avoided what would have been a fifth consecutive defeat, a result that significantly boosts morale in their relegation battle.

The draw lifts Lecce to 28 points, level with Cremonese, who sit just above the relegation

zone, with only the bottom three teams dropping at the end of the season.

Fiorentina, meanwhile, remain in 15th place, eight points clear of danger, and extended their unbeaten league run to six matches despite missing the chance to secure a third straight win.

The result reflects Lecce's fighting spirit as they continue to battle for survival in a tightly contested relegation race, where every point is proving crucial in determining their Serie A future heading into the final stretch of the campaign.

Gheorghe Hagi appointed Romania coach again following Mircea Lucescu's passing

Romania great Gheorghe Hagi returns for second stint as national team coach

BUCHAREST

Romania football legend Gheorghe Hagi has been appointed national team coach for a second spell, stepping in after the death of Mircea Lucescu, who passed away two weeks ago at the age of 80, marking a significant emotional and sporting transition for Romanian football.

The 61-year-old Hagi, widely regarded as the greatest player in Romania's history, returns to international management nearly 25 years after his brief first stint in 2001, when he lasted only three months following an unsuccessful World Cup qualification campaign.

Hagi famously led Romania to the 1994 FIFA World Cup



quarterfinals and enjoyed a stellar playing career featuring spells at top European clubs including Barcelona and Real Madrid, where he was known for his creative vision and technical brilliance.

Since retiring as a player, Hagi has built a respected coaching career at club level, managing teams in Romania

and Turkey, including Galatasaray and Steaua Bucharest, earning recognition for his commitment to developing young talent.

Romania currently sit 56th in the FIFA rankings and have already missed out on qualification for the upcoming World Cup in the United States, Canada and Mexico after losing a playoff tie against Turkey.

Following that defeat, former coach Lucescu stepped down due to health issues before his passing earlier this month, leaving the national team in a period of transition and uncertainty. In his official statement, Hagi described his return as both an honour and a major responsibility, emphasising his emotional connec-

tion to representing Romania at international level once again.

He expressed optimism about the team's future, stating his belief that strong performances and unity could help Romania rebuild competitiveness on the international stage.

Hagi also said he hopes to translate his success as a player into coaching achievements, signalling ambition to elevate Romania's standing in world football despite recent setbacks.

The Romanian Football Federation has backed his appointment, viewing him as a symbolic and strategic choice to inspire a new generation of players while restoring belief within the national setup.

Injured Alcaraz waits on wrist tests as French Open clock ticks

MADRID

Carlos Alcaraz's participation in the French Open is now in serious doubt after the defending two-time champion revealed that a right wrist injury continues to trouble him, with crucial medical tests scheduled in the coming days to determine his fitness for the Grand Slam next month.

The 22-year-old Spaniard, who has already won seven Grand Slam titles, said he remains uncertain about his recovery timeline and admitted that his return to full competition will depend entirely on upcoming scan results and medical assessments.

Alcaraz withdrew from the Madrid Open last week and was seen attending the Laureus Awards in Madrid with his right wrist immobilised, raising further concerns about the severity of the injury.

He said the next medical evaluation would be decisive in shaping his immediate future on the tour and whether he can defend his French Open crown.

He explained that his team is doing everything possible to ensure recovery progresses smoothly, but emphasised the im-

portance of patience during this critical rehabilitation phase.

The injury first surfaced during his recent campaign in Barcelona, where he required treatment on his wrist during a straight-sets victory over Otto Virtanen before later withdrawing from the tournament. Alcaraz admitted that the uncertainty has made the past few days challenging, but insisted he is trying to remain positive while waiting for further clarity on his condition.

He added that multiple tests will be conducted in the coming days, which will determine whether he can resume training and prepare for Roland Garros.

The French Open remains his most successful Grand Slam, and any extended absence would significantly impact his title defence and ranking momentum heading into the clay season.

Following Madrid, the next major tournament on the calendar is the Italian Open, where Alcaraz triumphed last year, but his participation there also now depends on recovery progress.



Wembanyama is unanimous selection as NBA defensive player of the year

SAN ANTONIO

Victor Wembanyama has become the first unanimous winner of the NBA Defensive Player of the Year award, completing a historic milestone after a dominant season anchoring the San Antonio Spurs' defence. At just 22 years old, the towering 7-foot-4 centre is also the youngest ever recipient of the award, adding another landmark achievement to his rapidly growing list of accolades.

Wembanyama led the league in blocked shots for a third consecutive season, con-

sistently altering opposition game plans with his rim protection, timing, and ability to cover ground unlike any player in recent memory.

The Spurs star said the toughest challenge was meeting the 65-game eligibility requirement, but expressed pride at securing the honour and becoming the first unanimous DPOY winner in league history.

Oklahoma City's Chet Holmgren finished second in the voting, while Detroit's Ausar Thompson placed third, both earning recognition for their defensive im-

pact during strong seasons for their respective teams.

Wembanyama's dominance was never seriously questioned throughout the campaign, as opponents repeatedly struggled to score inside against his length, anticipation, and defensive instincts.

Spurs forward Keldon Johnson praised his teammate, calling him the best defensive player in the world and highlighting his relentless work ethic and commitment to improvement.

HONOLULU

The PGA Tour will not stage a tournament in Hawaii in 2027, marking the first time in 56 years that the islands will be absent from the professional golf calendar as the tour moves toward a revamped early-season schedule.

The decision follows months of uncertainty surrounding the future of The Sentry at Kapalua on Maui, which was canceled earlier this year due to drought conditions and a long-running dispute over water management on the island.

The Plantation Course at Kapalua, long admired for its scenic ocean views and wide fairways, had hosted the PGA Tour's season opener since 1999, initially as a winners-only event before expanding under new sponsorship arrangements.

The PGA Tour confirmed the development after notifying staff involved at Kapalua, while expressing gratitude to the resort, Maui County, and the state of Hawaii for decades of support and partnership.

The Sony Open in Honolulu, traditionally played the week after Kapalua and held at Waialae Country Club since 1965, is also undergoing transition as its current sponsorship cycle concludes.

Organisers are reportedly exploring a potential move for the Sony Open into the PGA Tour

PGA Tour to skip Hawaii in 2027, ending 56-year tradition

Champions schedule, although no formal decision has been announced regarding its future placement.

The removal of Hawaii from the 2027 calendar reflects broader structural changes within the PGA Tour, which is reassessing its season-opening sequence and global scheduling priorities.

Sentry Insurance, which has been the title sponsor at Kapalua since 2018, remains committed to its long-term partnership through 2035 despite the event's relocation uncertainty. The most recent edition of The Sentry saw record-breaking scoring conditions, with Hideki Matsuyama winning at 35 under par in what turned out to be the final tournament at Kapalua for the foreseeable future.

The tournament has historically been expensive to stage due to logistical challenges, including transporting equipment to Maui, alongside relatively modest attendance figures compared to mainland events.



QUICK READ



Bank credit growth hits 16% amid funding pressure

NEW DELHI
Bank lending in India grew sharply, reaching Rs 213.6 lakh crore by March 31, marking a 16.1% rise compared to last year, according to a report. Growth was driven by strong retail loans, MSME financing, and corporate borrowing. The credit–deposit ratio stayed high at 81.4%, showing banks are lending more than before. Total deposits also increased to Rs 262.3 lakh crore. Experts said demand for loans remains strong, especially in small businesses and consumer segments like vehicles and gold loans, supporting overall banking activity and economic growth.



Airtel boosts 5G network across Maharashtra, Goa

PUNE
Bharti Airtel has expanded its 5G network by adding over 3,400 new sites across Maharashtra and Goa. The rollout now covers more than 22 million users across 36 districts, including remote areas like Gadchiroli and Nandurbar. The company said the expansion will improve speed, connectivity, and digital services such as streaming, online learning, and payments. Airtel officials said growing data demand is driving continuous upgrades. The telecom firm is also investing in stronger coverage across rural and urban regions to support rising internet usage and better network reliability.

India says milk supply stable despite West Asia crisis

NEW DELHI
Milk supply, prices, and dairy operations across India remain stable despite the ongoing West Asia crisis, the government said. Officials confirmed there are no disruptions in procurement, processing, or distribution of milk and dairy products. Fuel supply for dairy plants has also been secured, with industries assured of 70% of their LPG needs, helping avoid shortages. Authorities said packaging materials are available and supply chains are running smoothly. The government continues to monitor the sector closely and coordinate with states to ensure farmers are paid on time and milk availability remains steady nationwide.

Apple successor to fast track India growth

Apple CEO Tim Cook’s retirement marks a strategic shift, with successor John Ternus prioritizing India’s \$4 trillion expansion

NEW DELHI

As Apple CEO Tim Cook prepares to step down this September, all eyes are on his successor, John Ternus, to lead the tech giant’s massive expansion in India. Cook leaves behind a \$4 trillion empire and a company that has successfully shifted much of its focus from China to Indian shores. Under Cook’s leadership, India transformed into a vital hub for Apple. The country now assembles nearly one-quarter of all iPhones globally. Experts believe this momentum will only speed up under Ternus. While Cook was the visionary who opened flagship stores and connected with local developers, Ternus brings an engineering background that may appeal to India’s young, tech-savvy population. Industry analysts say India is playing a dual role for Apple, it is both a powerhouse for manufacturing and a rapidly growing market for buyers. "India is becoming the new China for Apple's supply chain," noted Prabhu Ram of CyberMedia Research. By moving production to India and Vietnam, Apple has successfully reduced its dependence on other regions amidst global political tensions. In his farewell statement,



Cook called his time at Apple the "greatest privilege" of his life. Since 2011, he grew the company’s value from \$350 billion to \$4 trillion. While Cook previously brushed off retirement rumors as "just talk," his departure marks the end of an era. Now, the mission falls to Ternus to turn India into the primary engine for Apple’s next decade of global growth.

India’s two-wheeler sales hit record 22 million units

NEW DELHI

India’s two-wheeler industry has just made history. According to a new report, domestic sales hit an all-time high of 22 million units in the 2026 fiscal year. This milestone marks a massive 11% jump in volume compared to the previous year, proving that the country’s love for scooters and motorcycles is stronger than ever. The year ended with a bang, as sales in March alone surged by nearly 29%. Experts credit this boom to several factors, tax reforms (GST), lower interest rates, and extra cash in the pockets of rural buyers. Whether people were looking for basic commuter bikes or high-end "aspirational" models, there was a bike for everyone. Electric vehicles (EVs)



also stole the spotlight. Retail sales for electric two-wheelers jumped over 47% in March, as more riders made the switch to green energy. By the end of the fiscal year, electric models accounted for nearly 10% of all monthly sales, a significant step toward a cleaner future on Indian roads. Looking ahead, the road might have a few bumps. Analysts predict growth will slow

to about 3 - 5% next year due to a weak monsoon outlook and the "El Nino" weather pattern, which often hurts rural spending. Additionally, conflicts in the Middle East could pose risks to exports and parts supplies. Still, with Indian brands gaining global fame and exports rising by 23%, the industry remains in a very strong position.

Advanced systems to cool AI data centers unveiled

SEOUL

LG Electronics is making a major play for the heart of the AI revolution. The tech giant announced it is pivoting its cooling and energy business to focus on the massive power and heat demands of artificial intelligence data centers. As AI chips get faster, they also get much hotter. To solve this, LG showcased a powerful "liquid cooling" system at a global tech event in Washington. Unlike traditional fans, this "direct-to-chip" design flows coolant right over the processors to soak up heat instantly. These new units have a massive capacity of 1.4 megawatts, more than double what was previously possible, allowing them to handle the world’s most intense computing tasks.

LG is even testing "immersion cooling," where entire servers are submerged in a special liquid that doesn't conduct electricity. This method is considered the gold standard for energy efficiency in modern data centers. The company isn't just stopping at temperature control, they want to manage the power, too. By working with specialized partners, LG is developing a new electrical grid that reduces power waste. Currently, data centers lose about 25% of their electricity when converting it for use, LG aims to cut that loss down to just 15%. This shift toward "end-to-end" solutions shows that LG plans to be much more than a home appliance brand, they want to be the backbone of the global AI infrastructure.

Adani group makes bold nuke power move

AHMEDABAD

The Adani Group is charging ahead into the world of nuclear power. Adani Power announced it has created a new company specifically dedicated to atomic energy, called Rawatbhata-Raj Atomic Energy Limited (RRAEL). This is a major sign that one of India’s biggest business giants is ready to help power the nation’s future with nuclear energy. The new company was officially set up with a starting capital of ₹5 lakh. It is part of a larger structure under Adani Power, designed to focus entirely on nuclear projects. Interestingly, Adani didn’t stop there. Another branch of the group started a second nuclear-focused firm called Coastal-Maha Atomic Energy Limited. This sister company will handle everything from generating atomic power to sending it through



the electrical grid. These back-to-back moves come at a perfect time for India’s energy goals. Right now, the country produces about 8.7 gigawatts of nuclear power. However, the government has set a massive target to hit 100 gigawatts by 2047. To reach that goal, India needs private companies to step up and build more plants alongside state-run projects.

United Kingdom, India, and South Korea are cutting taxes, boosting subsidies, and adjusting fuel and power policies to reduce household burden. India is increasing LPG production and managing exports, while South Korea is expanding nuclear and coal

power use. Other nations are also tapping reserves, offering cash support, and controlling fuel prices. The global response highlights growing pressure on governments as energy markets remain unstable and prices stay high worldwide.

Russia to halt Kazakhstan oil flow to Germany

MOSCOW

Russia is set to stop oil shipments from Kazakhstan to Germany through the Druzhba pipeline from May 1, according to industry sources. The move could impact supply to Germany’s major PCK refinery, which depends heavily on this route for fuel production. Officials in Russia said they need to verify the reports, while no final confirmation has been issued. The pipeline has faced repeated disruptions in recent years. If halted, the decision may add pressure on Europe’s energy security, already strained by ongoing geopolitical tensions and reduced Russian oil supplies since the Ukraine conflict.

Korean giants pump massive AI fund in India

NEW DELHI
Leading South Korean companies have announced a major investment fund worth \$476.4 million to support fast-growing technology firms in India. The fund, called the Unicorn Growth Fund, was launched by Naver, Krafton, and Mirae Asset Group. The initiative will focus on sectors like artificial intelligence, fintech, and digital content. Officials from both countries attended the launch event held in New Delhi, highlighting growing business ties. The fund began earlier this year with an initial investment and is expected to grow further. Company leaders said India’s strong talent pool and startup ecosystem make it an ideal place for such investments. In a related move, Naver signed an agreement with Tata Consultancy Services to explore opportunities in AI and digital services. This partnership aims to boost innovation and expand business in India. Experts believe these steps will strengthen India’s position as a global technology hub.

AI FOR WELL-BEING

India tops global AI health adoption at 85%

MUMBAI

India has officially become the world leader in using artificial intelligence for health. A new report reveals that a massive 85% of Indian consumers are already using AI tools to manage their well-being, leaving countries like the US and UK far behind. While the global average for AI health adoption sits at 60%, India’s rate is nearly double that of Japan (34%) and significantly higher than the United Kingdom (43%)

and the United States (50%). This rapid shift shows that Indians are increasingly comfortable using digital technology to stay healthy. The study, which surveyed 13,000 people across 15 countries, found that younger people are leading the charge. About 78% of Gen Z and 71% of Millennials use AI for medical tasks. Currently, most people use these tools through fitness wearables or chatbots to ask simple questions. However, users are now looking for “smarter” AI that

can actually book doctor appointments, manage prescriptions, and check for dangerous drug interactions. Despite the tech boom, patients aren’t ready to say goodbye to human doctors. Most people prefer a “hybrid” model where AI assists doctors with tricky tasks, like reading test results or tracking long-term illnesses, rather than replacing them entirely. As the technology grows, India’s healthcare system is expected to become one of the most digitally advanced in the world.





Hayden slams GT after 99-run thrashing by MI in IPL

GT batting coach Matthew Hayden blasts team after heavy defeat MI match

AHMEDABAD

Gujarat Titans suffered a crushing 99-run defeat to Mumbai Indians in IPL 2026 at the Narendra Modi Stadium in Ahmedabad, a result that left batting coach Matthew Hayden seething over the team's overall performance. Mumbai Indians posted a commanding 199/5 after being put in to bat, largely driven by a blistering unbeaten century from Tilak Varma, who struck 101 off just 45 deliveries, dominating the death overs with aggressive stroke play.

Despite early breakthroughs from Gujarat, the final four overs proved disastrous as MI

added 73 runs, exposing GT's bowling vulnerabilities. Hayden described the phase as unacceptable, pointing to repeated execution errors from senior bowlers who failed to control the scoring rate at the back end.

In response, Gujarat Titans collapsed dramatically in their chase, losing opener Sai Sudharsan for a golden duck and slipping to 45/3 inside the powerplay. The middle order offered little resistance as MI's bowlers, including Ashwani Kumar, Mitchell Santner, and AM Ghazanfar, dismantled the lineup with disciplined spells. GT were eventually bowled out for just 100, far short of the target.

Hayden did not hold back in his assessment, calling the batting display "a terrible performance" and stressing that the margin of defeat reflected poor decision-making and mindset issues. He emphasised that the team's top-order batters needed to spend more time at the crease and convert starts into meaningful contributions.

While critical of the batting unit, Hayden reserved praise for Kagiso Rabada, who stood out with figures of 3/33, maintaining pace and consistency even as others struggled.

However, he noted that individual brilliance could not mask collective failure.

Hardik Pandya refuses to be blamed for Bumrah's wicket drought

AHMEDABAD

Hardik Pandya firmly defended Jasprit Bumrah after Mumbai Indians victory over Gujarat Titans in IPL 2026 at Ahmedabad saying criticism over the pacer's wicket drought was unfair.

Bumrah who had gone wicketless in first five matches of the season made a stunning return by striking on the very first ball of Gujarat's innings dismissing Sai Sudharsan and shifting momentum instantly.

He ended with impressive figures of 3 for 15 in three overs playing a key role in Mumbai's 99 run win after posting 199 for 5.

Pandya rejected suggestions that his captaincy or bowling management had affected Bumrah's early wicket tally saying the team uses him strategically based on match situations.

He said people often question why Bumrah does not bowl the first over more frequently but insisted it is about tactical flexibility rather than any issue.

Pandya highlighted that

Bumrah has featured in over 150 IPL matches and has bowled the first over only a handful of times reinforcing that workload and matchups dictate usage.

According to him Bumrah remains Mumbai's most valuable weapon and is deployed in phases where impact is maximised rather than being restricted to opening spells.

Mumbai Indians posted 199 for 5 thanks to Tilak Varma's unbeaten 101 off 45 balls while Naman Dhir contributed 45 runs to stabilise the innings. The bowling unit then delivered a collective effort with Ashwani Kumar taking 4 for 24 and Mitchell Santner and Allah Ghazanfar picking two wickets each.

Pandya concluded that the win was crucial for Mumbai after a poor run of four consecutive defeats and praised the team's intensity and execution under pressure in Ahmedabad.

Looking ahead Pandya said Mumbai Indians will focus on maintaining consistency as they prepare for their upcoming clash against Chennai Super Kings highlighting that

Bumrah's rhythm returning at the right time is a massive boost for the bowling attack and that the team management remains confident in its tactical plans regarding bowler rotation and workload management while ensuring Bumrah is used in high impact phases rather than fixed overs which Pandya believes maximises match winning value.



IPL 2026



Maiden IPL century will always be special, says Tilak Varma

Tilak Varma reflects on maiden IPL hundred after MI win against GT

AHMEDABAD

Tilak Varma's maiden IPL century proved to be a defining moment in Mumbai Indians' dominant 99-run victory over Gujarat Titans in Ahmedabad, a performance that also earned him the Player of the Match award.

He said the first hundred of his IPL career will always remain special, especially coming in a high-pressure game where his team needed stability after early setbacks.

Tilak explained that he initially focused on spending

time at the crease, taking a cautious approach in the first phase before accelerating once he understood the conditions and match situation. He added that his ability to rotate strike early helped him settle before playing his natural attacking game later in the innings while maintaining control under pressure. Tilak also praised his partnership with Naman Dhir, saying the youngster's positive intent allowed Mumbai Indians to maintain momentum during crucial middle overs despite early wickets falling.

He noted that while he has a range of attacking shots, the situation demanded discipline and smart shot selection, which he believes made the difference in converting his start into a big score.

Varma said staying calm under pressure was key, especially after recent games where he had limited time in the middle and needed to

adapt quickly to match demands.

He further credited the team management for backing him in different batting roles throughout the season, which has helped him grow in confidence and responsibility.

Mumbai Indians posted 199 for 5, with Varma's unbeaten 101 off 45 balls anchoring the innings after early wickets, before the bowlers bundled Gujarat Titans out for 100. He said such dominant wins help the team regain momentum in the tournament as they aim to climb the points table after a mixed start to IPL 2026 season.

Tilak concluded that personal milestones matter less than team success, adding that consistency and adaptability will be crucial in upcoming matches as Mumbai Indians look to strengthen their position in the league standings and push for qualification in the IPL 2026 playoffs. He also thanked fans for their support throughout the season so far and continues to motivate him further.



Sunrisers Hyderabad (242/2) beat Delhi Capitals (195/9) by 47 runs in IPL 2026 clash at the Rajiv Gandhi International Stadium in Hyderabad on Tuesday.

SHUBMAN GILL FINDS FAULT WITH BOWLERS AGAINST MI

AHMEDABAD



Despite Gujarat Titans being bundled out for 100 while chasing 200 against Mumbai Indians in IPL 2026, skipper Shubman Gill chose to focus his post-match criticism on the bowling unit, highlighting what he believed were costly lapses in the middle overs that allowed MI to post a match-winning total of 199/5 at the Narendra Modi Stadium in Ahmedabad.

Tilak Varma's blistering unbeaten 101 off 45 balls proved decisive as Mumbai Indians recovered strongly after early setbacks, capitalising on Gujarat's inability to maintain control in the latter stages of the innings.

Although Kagiso Rabada picked up three wickets in the powerplay, Gujarat failed to sustain pressure through the middle phase.

Gill admitted that on a slightly sluggish pitch, his side had targeted a par score of around 160-170 but fell short in execution.

He stressed that inconsistent lengths and missed plans in the middle overs allowed Mumbai to shift momentum decisively in their favour.

The GT captain said the defeat should be viewed as a learning opportunity, especially with the tournament entering a crucial phase.

He acknowledged that while conditions were challenging, the bowling group failed to adapt consistently to the surface.

Gujarat's margin of defeat—99 runs—marked their heaviest loss in IPL history, underlining the scale of the collapse despite MI themselves putting up a recoverable start early in the innings.

Gill further pointed out that slight dew in the second innings may have marginally eased batting conditions, but insisted the pitch behaviour remained largely similar throughout the match.

In reply, Gujarat's chase never gained momentum as they collapsed early, losing key wickets inside the powerplay and eventually folding for 100.

MI's bowlers maintained discipline throughout, ensuring no resistance from the middle and lower order.

With this result, Gujarat Titans slipped to sixth place in the standings, while Mumbai Indians moved up with a much-needed win.

CSK lose their top-scoring batter Ayush Mhatre for remaining season

CHENNAI

Chennai Super Kings have suffered a major setback in IPL 2026 after confirmation that their explosive young opener Ayush Mhatre has been ruled out for the remainder of the season due to a left hamstring injury sustained on April 18 against Sunrisers Hyderabad.

CSK confirmed that the 18-year-old will require a rehabilitation period of six to 12 weeks, effectively ending his campaign. Mhatre had been one of the standout performers for CSK this season, scoring 201 runs in six matches at a strike rate of 177.88 with two half-centuries. His absence leaves CSK without their most consistent top-order aggressor, putting pressure on the management to find an immediate replacement ahead of crucial matches. The franchise is reportedly considering options such as Urvil Patel, Kartik Sharma, and several uncapped domestic players to fill the void in the top order.

Patel, known for his explosive hitting and record-breaking 28-ball T20 century, is seen as the closest like-for-like replacement within the squad structure. CSK will also explore external options from the unsold players pool if internal replacements do not deliver the required impact in upcoming fixtures. The team management has



acknowledged that Mhatre's absence is a significant blow but remains optimistic about the depth available in the squad. With CSK already facing pressure in the points table, the loss of their top scorer adds further urgency to their campaign turnaround efforts. Mhatre is expected to undergo rehabilitation for up to three months, with medical staff prioritising a full recovery ahead of future domestic commitments.

CSK concluded by wishing the young batter a speedy recovery, expressing confidence that he will return stronger in upcoming seasons of the IPL. Despite the setback, CSK are expected to continue rotating their top-order options as they aim to stabilise their campaign in the coming matches.

PCB in talks to build stadium in Saudi Arabia

LAHORE

The Pakistan Cricket Board is in advanced discussions with the Saudi Arabia Cricket Federation to construct a new cricket stadium in Jeddah, a move that has already received approval from the PCB Governing Board.

According to PCB sources, chairman Mohsin Naqvi is personally leading negotiations with Saudi officials, and an expression of interest for the project has already been submitted as discussions move forward.

The proposed stadium in Jeddah is expected to feature modern facilities including floodlights, high-quality pitches, and seating capacity suitable for international matches and Pakistan Super League fixtures.

Officials believe the project could significantly boost cricket development in Saudi Arabia, where interest in

the sport has grown rapidly due to a large South Asian expatriate population.

Saudi cricket authorities had earlier approached the PCB with the idea, reflecting the kingdom's ambition to expand its sporting profile and possibly launch its own domestic T20 league.

PCB officials have expressed willingness to support the initiative, citing strong bilateral relations and the opportunity to strengthen cricket ties between the two nations.

Sources also highlighted the presence of a large Pakistani and South Asian community in Saudi Arabia as a key factor driving the proposal forward.

If finalised, the stadium could also host Pakistan Super League matches outside the UAE, marking a major step in the tournament's international expansion strategy.

At present, the UAE remains the principal hub for international cricket in the Middle East, hosting Tests, ODIs, T20 leagues and ICC events, but PCB's proposed venture with Saudi Arabia signals a potential shift in regional cricket dynamics.

Between 2010 and 2019, the UAE also served as Pakistan's home venue for international cricket due to security concerns, and the PSL itself was launched in Dubai in 2016 before later expanding to Pakistan.

